

UMOR BY IAN FRAZIER / RALPH LOMBREGLIA ON PHILIP ROTH

The Atlantic Monthly

JUNE 1997

THE ~~AIDS~~

**EXCEPTION:
PRIVACY VS.
PUBLIC HEALTH**

**THE CASE FOR
REINSTATING
TRADITIONAL RULES
FOR FIGHTING
EPIDEMICS**

Wm Conway Jr.

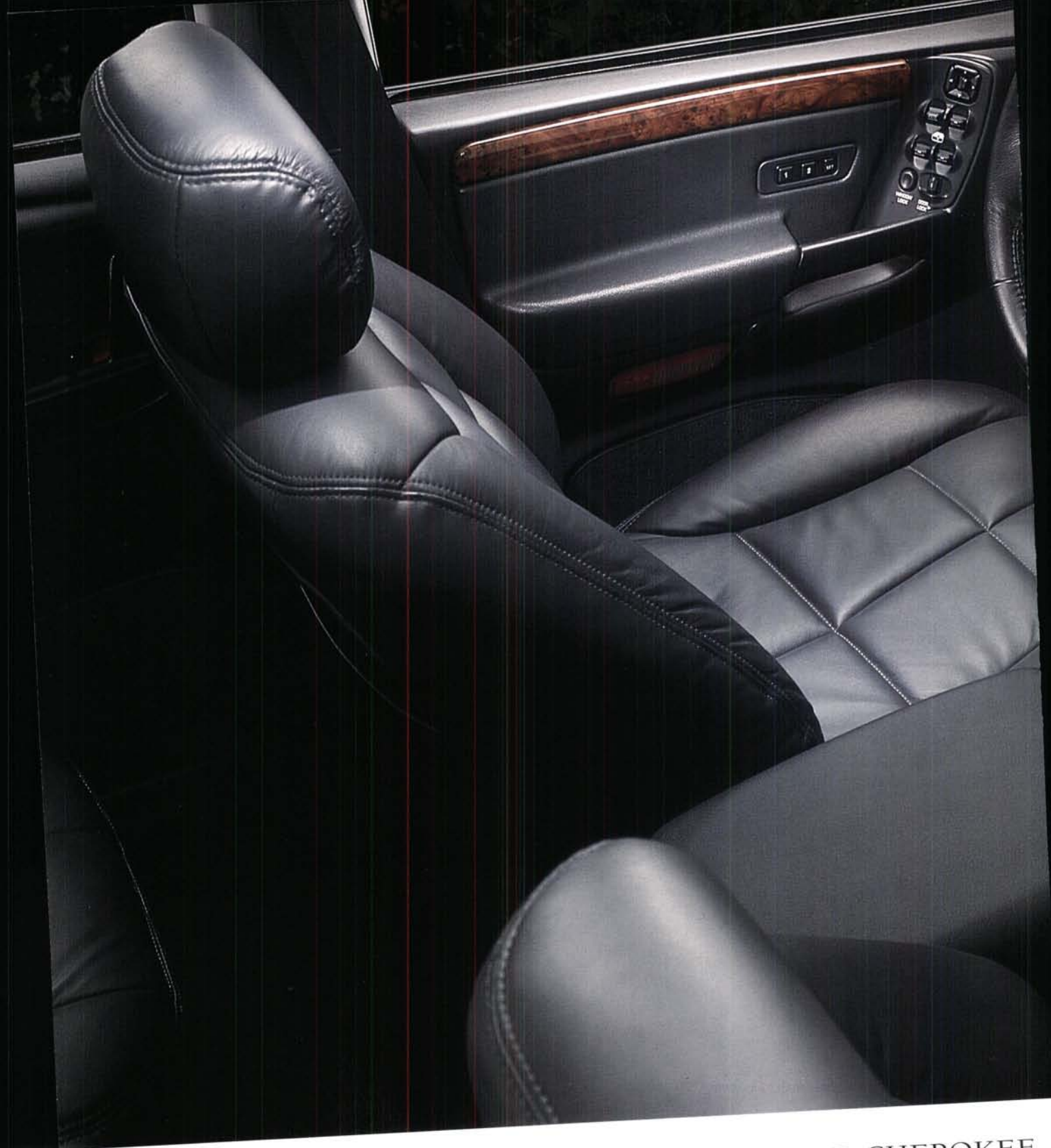
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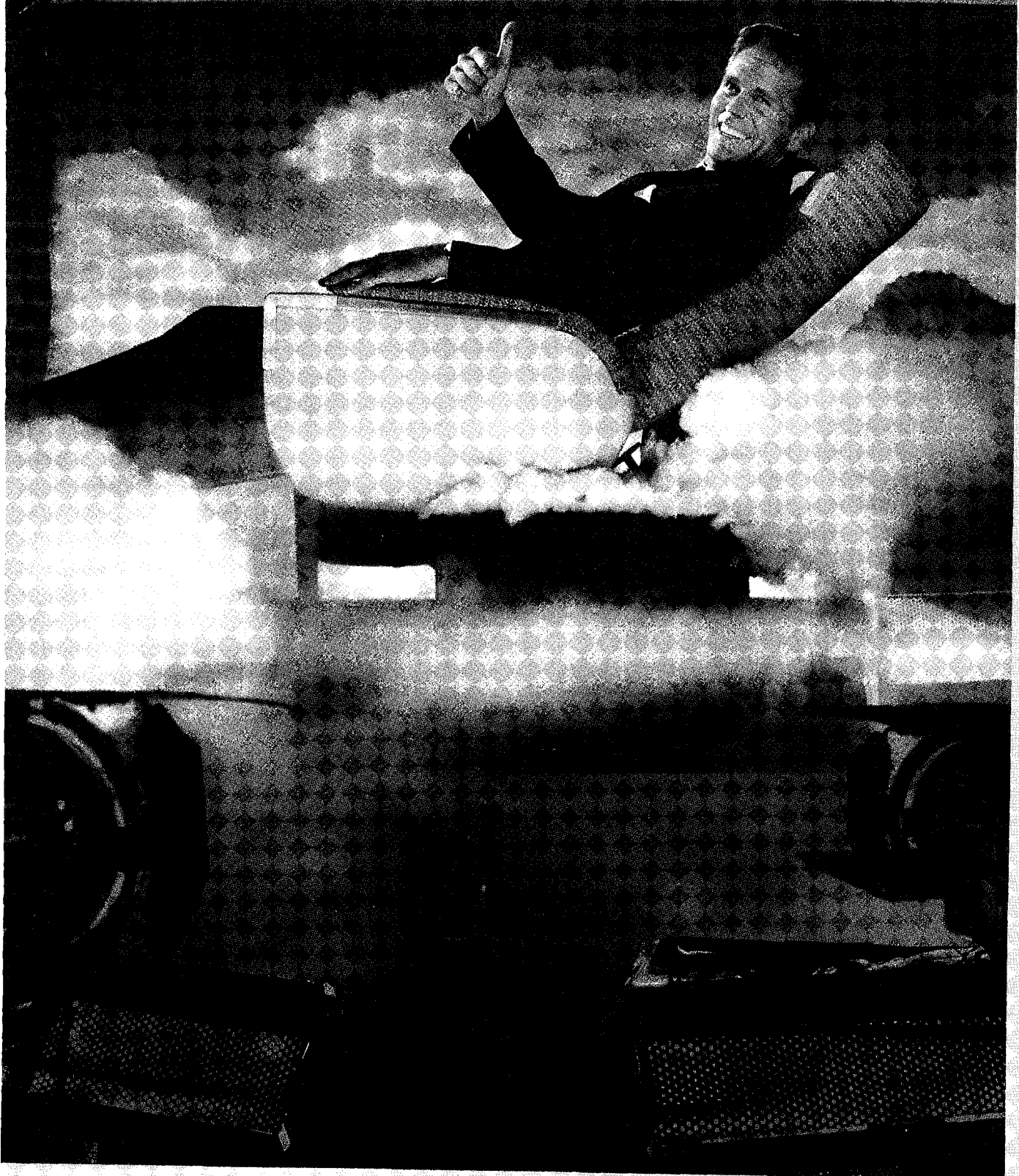


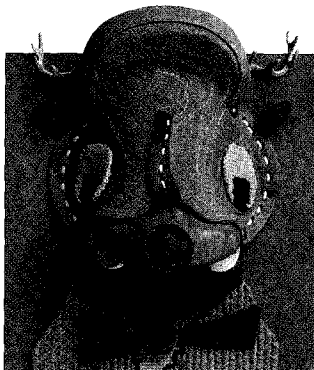
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CHANDLER Burr, the author of this month's cover story, "The AIDS Exception: Privacy vs. Public Health," could scarcely have anticipated a decade ago, when he was a graduate student in international economics, that his journalistic interests would take him in the direction that they have. His first submission to *The Atlantic Monthly* (flagged for attention by James Fallows, then our Washington editor, who had just returned from Asia) was a long, tortuous, strangely riveting account, which we were ultimately unable to use, of the obstacles that face a person trying to buy an American car in Japan. Burr eventually came back to us with a subject that engaged both his deep personal interest and his indefatigable curiosity. The article that resulted, "Homosexuality and Biology," looked at new scientific thinking about the origins of sexual orientation; it was *The Atlantic's* cover story in March of 1993. From that article grew Burr's book *A Separate Creation: The Search for the Biological Origins of Sexual Orientation* (1996), whose "plain-spoken and matter-of-fact" reporting was singled out by the *Los Angeles Times* as being all the more remarkable in that the topic is often plagued by hype and controversy.

Chandler Burr, thirty-three, grew up in the Washington,

D.C., area, and received his undergraduate degree from Principia College after academic forays in China, France, and Italy. In 1990 he received a masters degree in international economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Wherever he has found himself, Burr has maintained a parallel life as a writer. His reporting has been published in many national magazines, and his play *Exquisite*, which addresses questions of Japanese and American cultural and economic identity, was nominated in 1992 for the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play.

Burr speaks on college campuses around the country about biological science, politics, and pertinent aspects of the law (these sessions have been described as "spirited"), and he is currently writing a book about civil rights and constitutional law. His article in this issue touches on all these areas, and

takes a point of view that runs counter to that of the AIDS establishment. Burr argues that concerns about privacy have unreasonably been allowed to hamper the fight against a deadly and infectious disease. Some will angrily demur. We would argue that with lives at stake, scrutinizing orthodoxy from time to time is simple prudence. —THE EDITORS



CURTIS KELLEY

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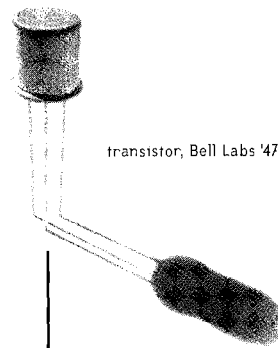
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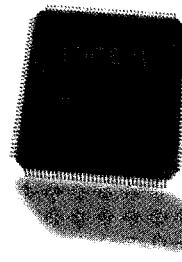
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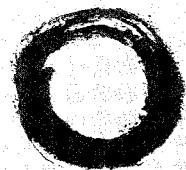
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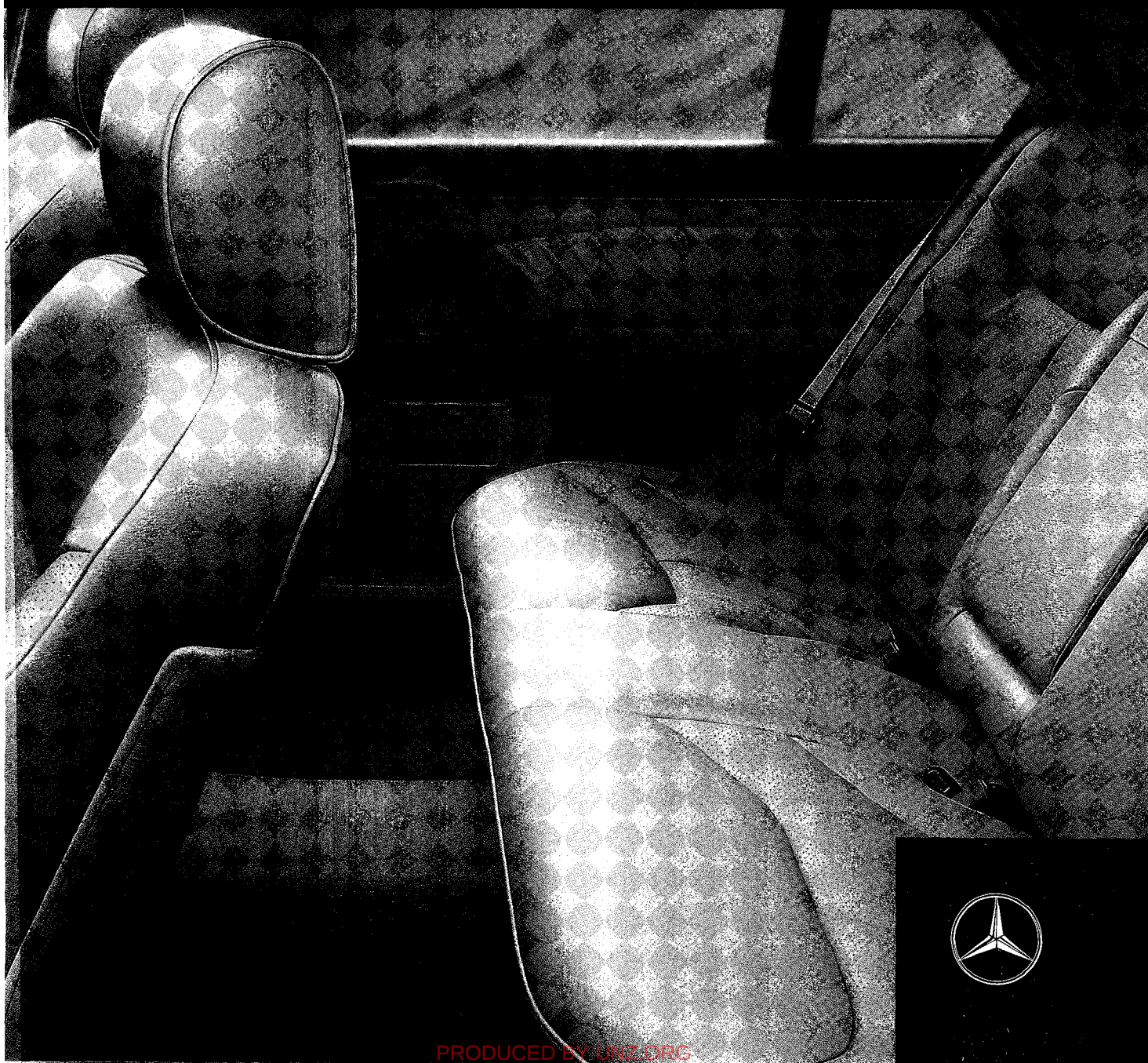
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LETTERS

Welfare Bill

In a postscript to Peter Edelman's outstanding cover story, "The Worst Thing Bill Clinton Has Done" (March *Atlantic*), the Administration has published its rules interpreting the new law's provisions regarding the eligibility of low-income disabled children for Supplementary Security Income cash benefits.

Congress, motivated by the notion of "saving" money from families caring for disabled children and fueled by what have been determined to be inaccurate or unrepresentative anecdotes in the media, had directed that eligibility be restricted for children who already had to show substantial medical evidence of very serious mental and physical impairments. Yet the same Congress gave the Administration considerable discretion regarding how strict the new qualifying test would be.

Through "interim final" Social Security Administration regulations issued in February, the White House opted for the strictest test on the table—one that not even this Congress directly mandated. President Clinton rejected the viable option urged by a group of bipartisan senators that would have dropped 40,000 children, in favor of a standard that will terminate benefits to a large majority of the 263,000 children to be reviewed shortly. Children in whom mental retardation has been diagnosed will take the biggest hit.

We have not seen the end of the worst thing Bill Clinton has done.

Jonathan M. Stein
Philadelphia, Pa.

Despite his assertion that the new welfare system is even worse than the old one, Peter Edelman offers only more of the same as a remedy: more federally funded job-training programs, child care, health care, and on and on.

In light of rising unmet needs that might result from the new welfare legis-

lation, does Edelman urge readers to volunteer at their local homeless shelters? Does he ask more parents to adopt foster children? Does he admonish more doctors and nurses to offer their services at free clinics? No. He urges us to become lobbyists for more welfare—to "press for state and local funds" for immigrants, children, and other beneficiaries and to otherwise ensure that the government "doesn't reduce its own investment of funds."

Our thirty-year War on Poverty shows that the government cannot effectively fight poverty. The institutions that can—indeed, the ones that are succeeding now—are strong families, neighborhoods, churches, and charities that offer compassion but make tough demands on those seeking help. Reinvigorating these institutions, not funding more government programs, is the task ahead.

Terrence Scanlon
President, Capital Research Center
Washington, D.C.

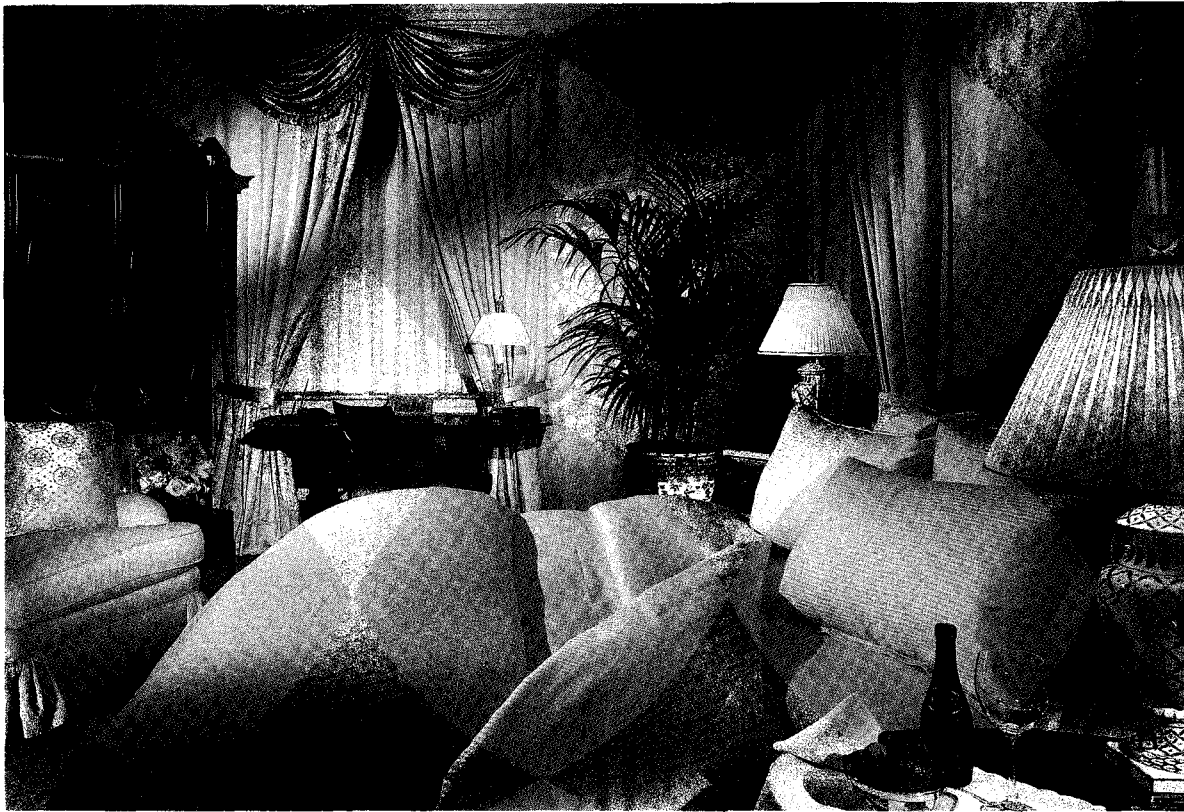
Did I miss something? I couldn't find Peter Edelman's rationale to explain how more money and more government will solve welfare problems when exactly the same "cures," although tried repeatedly, have failed over the past several decades. Also, I failed to see any evidence to support the implied contention that elected officials at the local and state levels are less compassionate and less concerned about the well-being of needy citizens than the administrators of gigantic bureaucracies.

Royce B. Crimmin
Bradford, Mass.

Peter Edelman replies:

Jonathan Stein expresses a concern I share. The Social Security Administration's choice of the more restrictive interpretation for the reviews of childhood disability cases is a disappointment.

Terrence Scanlon and Royce Crimmin make variations on the same point—that



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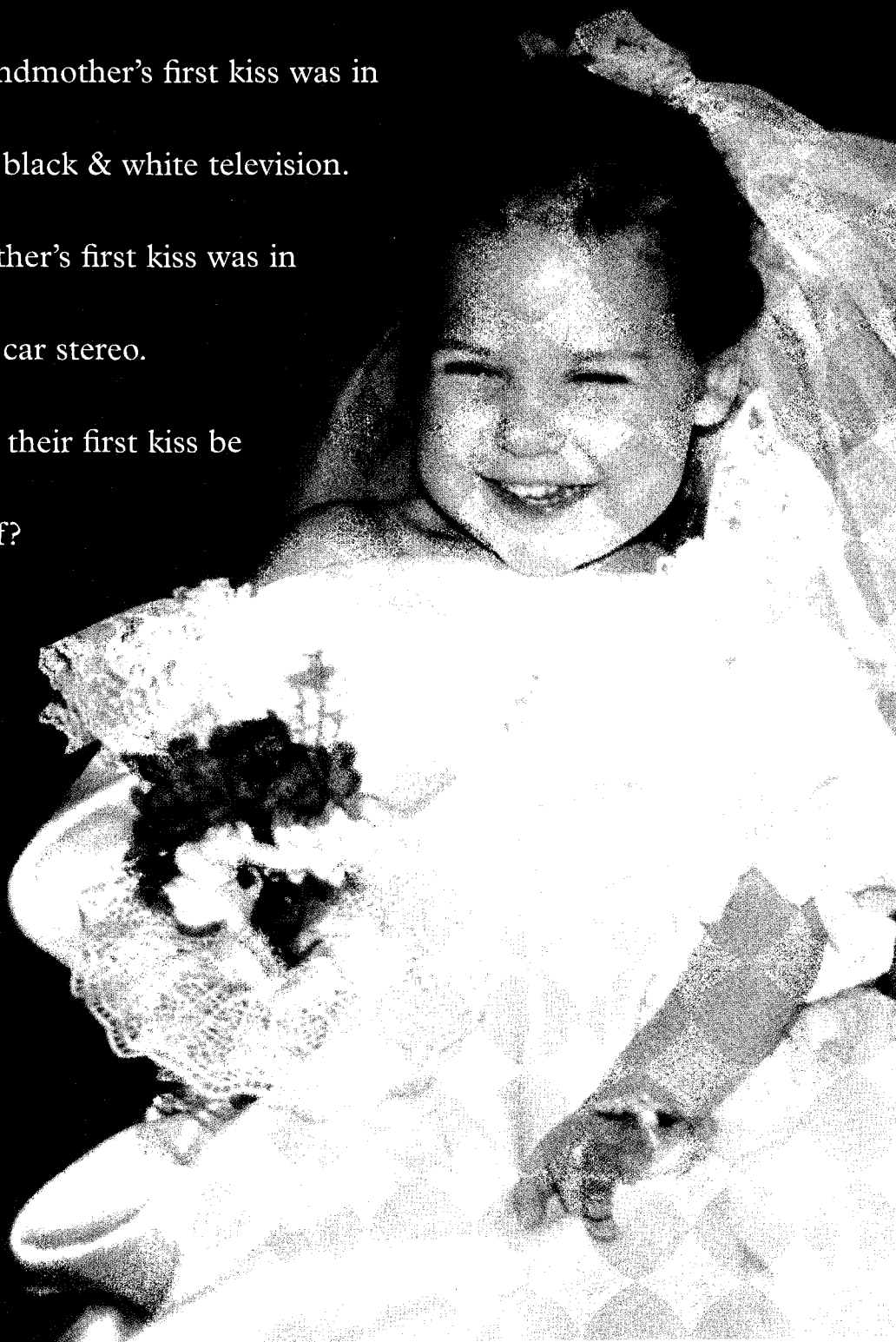
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I fail to offer meaningful alternatives, that I offer more of the same, and that those cures haven't worked. I may have failed to spell out everything that I think has to happen if we are going to change direction and actually reduce poverty substantially, but I don't think I was offering "more of the same." On the national side we need a serious debate about how globalization and macroeconomic policy affect poverty, about how public policy can ameliorate the huge distributional changes that have occurred over the past fifteen years, and about national spending priorities. I also believe we need tremendous private involvement at the local level, both institutional and individual. I thought I said this in the article. Perhaps the difference between me and Mr. Scanlon is that I think the answer has to be "both . . . and," not "either . . . or." We need more parents to adopt or to be foster parents, we need more volunteers at homeless shelters, and we need more doctors and nurses to volunteer at free clinics. We need the churches and the charities. We need to revitalize neighborhoods, with grassroots leaders at the heart of the effort. But I part company vehemently with anyone who believes that these essential elements of civic involvement will in and of themselves solve the problems.

To Mr. Crimmin I would say that I don't think local elected officials are in general any more or less compassionate than their national counterparts. The choice is not between the administrators of gigantic bureaucracies and elected state or local officials. It is between having some basic national framework of rules, to keep the states from straying too far as they pursue their own localized solutions, and having no safeguards at all.

Assisted Suicide

In his article on physician-assisted suicide, "Whose Right to Die?" (March *Atlantic*), Ezekiel Emanuel reaches conclusions that are invalid.

He identifies four "myths" supporting the right to physician-assisted suicide (PAS) and attempts to explode each in its turn. He dismisses the first—that changes in technology justify rethinking

the issue—on the bizarre basis that similar discussions took place 2,000 years ago. Medical advances during just this century, however, have managed to keep patients alive well beyond the point where fatal diseases would earlier have brought a quick end to a failing body.

He belittles popular support for PAS (Myth No. 2) on the grounds that it is neither broad nor deep, a conclusion he reaches by reinterpreting a fifty-year-old poll. He accepts a more recent poll showing support for PAS, but insists that it applies only to patients experiencing the unremitting physical pain of a terminal illness. He seems unaware—or unconcerned—that unremitting pain and terminal illness are just two of many conditions underlying all the passed and proposed legislation considering the issue.

His attempt to explode the third myth is a bit more confusing, in that having arbitrarily accepted unbearable pain as the single exception to a ban on PAS, he says that in the Netherlands pain plays only a minor part in most requests for ending life. In reality intractable pain, the loss of bodily control, and the irreversible and terminal nature of an illness are but several of many triggers for requesting PAS, all of which are tied to fear. It is the fear of having no control in ending their final decline that prompts most patients to request PAS while they are still able. There is ample evidence in both this country and the Netherlands that the mere availability of assistance when needed is enough reassurance for dying patients to forgo precipitous action.

The piece goes on, repeating and amplifying inaccuracies that deserve more exposure and clarification than is available in this short space. The fact, however, is that despite the generally honest and humane nature of most opposition to PAS, denying this option when no other treatment works is simply abandonment of the patient—an abuse that should be unacceptable.

Robert G. Faber
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Ezekiel Emanuel makes several arguments against the legalization of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia that are lacking in logic, consistency, and compassion.

For example, he writes, "We must not

be swayed by a few—or even a few thousand—wrenching cases in which such intervention seems unequivocally right." Says who? Can any thoughtful person accept the underlying premise that if, as Emanuel asserts, the number of patients seeking to end their lives because of unremitting and uncontrollable pain is by some measure small, their torment must continue, with any hope for mitigation dependent on the chance availability of physicians willing to risk criminal sanctions? Should there be some magic threshold—some critical mass of suffering—that must be attained before society will allow physicians to provide humane relief to individuals, whatever their number, who are in agony?

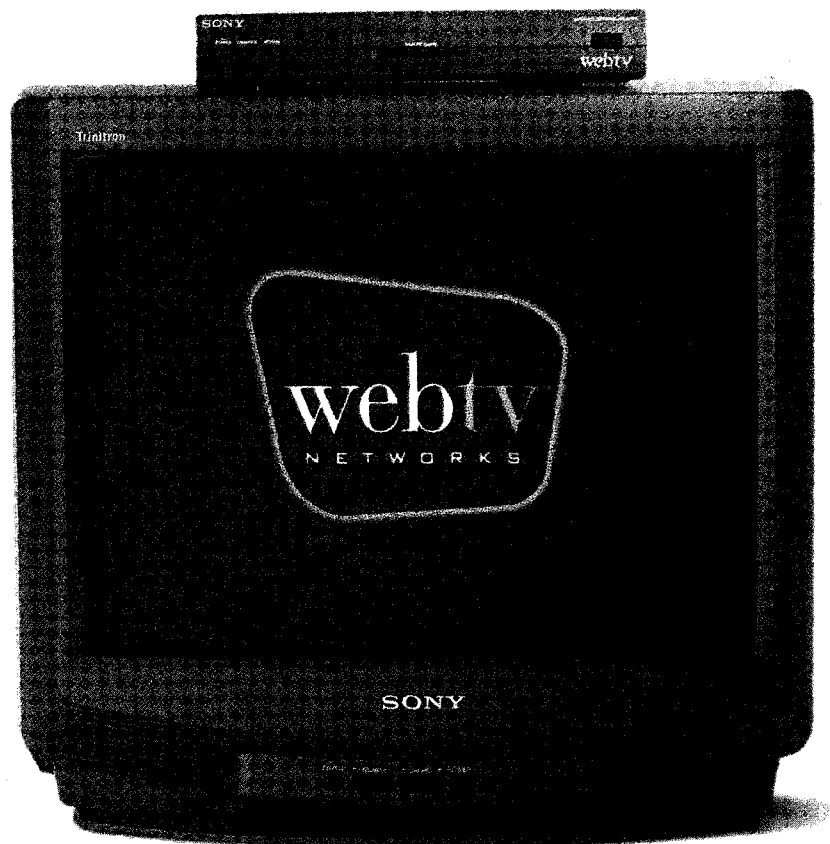
Emanuel further argues that the legalization of physician-assisted suicide would have the ironic consequence of causing patients who refuse this option to be viewed as responsible for their own suffering. (Of course, the same could be said right now of terminally ill patients who have the legal option of refusing medical treatment but choose not to do so—a right that, since it lessens the need for physician intervention in ending life humanely, Emanuel mentions with approval if not consistency.) True enough, one way to avoid the unpleasant consequences of opting for one course of action over another is legally to restrict the possibility of choice, but suggesting this in a matter so intensely grave and personal as coping with the final stages of terminal illness runs counter to our ideals of individual freedom and responsibility, which should be honored and preserved even for the very ill.

Stanley L. Spiegel
Brookline, Mass.

Ezekiel Emanuel replies:

Robert Faber writes that "fear" drives patients to seek physician-assisted suicide (PAS). We have no empirical evidence supporting this claim. But if it is true, we need to ask whether PAS and euthanasia are the way to treat patients' fear. Surely reassuring them about pain control, home care, spiritual support, and the like is more appropriate than ending their lives. What has happened to our society when people think the proper intervention for anxiety, fear, pain, or lack of control is death?

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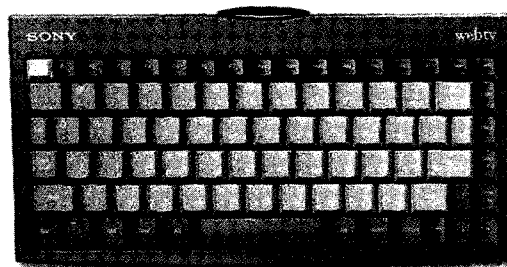
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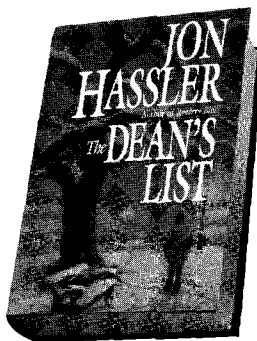


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Declaring that there is a right to euthanasia has become the ultimate trump, a license to ignore data and a means to silence ethical deliberation and debate. Such a right is hardly self-evident or self-justifying. This is precisely the issue the Supreme Court will address, and it is far from a foregone conclusion that the Court will affirm the right. Rational people should be able to end their own lives; suicide should remain decriminalized. But to say that is a far cry from saying that people have a right to have others, namely physicians and pharmacists, help them to end their lives. The ability to commit suicide is what Isaiah Berlin called a "negative liberty"—a liberty to keep others from interfering with the individual. The right to euthanasia is a positive liberty—a liberty to have others help to realize an individual's goal. The justifications for negative liberties are widely accepted, and the Bill of Rights is essentially a list of negative liberties; positive liberties are affirmed only when necessary to ensure robust participation in public affairs and to preserve essential opportunities. It is hard to see how granting a right to PAS and euthanasia is necessary to either of those goals.

In any case, the number of dying patients who have unremitting pain or who want to die and are physically incapable of killing themselves is very small—a few thousand of the 2.3 million Americans who die each year. Again, something is wrong with a society that finds itself ready to declare a constitutional right with profound dangers for millions of people to ensure the proper care of a few thousands.

Legalizing PAS and euthanasia would remove the burden of proof from those who want to perform these procedures and place it on those who want to restrict them. This subtle but important change would mean that patients and physicians would no longer have to demonstrate that everything had been done to ensure optimal care of the dying patient in order to justify euthanasia. PAS and euthanasia should be exceptional not because there should be "some critical mass of suffering," as Stanley Spiegel says, but because everything should be done to relieve suffering. This can occur only if PAS and euthanasia remain illegal.

Cultural Realism

It is always nice to have a positive review of one's book ("China's Strategic Culture," by Warren I. Cohen, *March Atlantic*). And I don't want to sound ungrateful. But Professor Cohen's review of my *Cultural Realism* contains two crucial misinterpretations of my work that may lead readers to believe that my views on how to deal with rising Chinese power are close to his. They are not.

In the first he says I contend that "China's willingness to use force has grown with the improvement in its capability. It is more likely to be confrontational as it grows stronger." This is not at all what I argue. I am very careful to point out (on page 257) that *once in a crisis*, China is more likely to resort to military force when its relative capabilities improve—a conclusion based on the data set I had at the time. Put another way, when China is not involved in a crisis, an improvement in its power does not necessarily lead it to act more aggressively.

This is not the same as saying that when China's relative capabilities improve, it becomes more aggressive. Indeed, data from the Correlates of War project at the University of Michigan suggest the opposite. As China's relative share of world power resources has increased since 1949, its involvement in militarized interstate disputes has declined. From 1945 to 1992, according to these data, the United States was the most dispute-prone major power, followed by China.

The second misinterpretation concerns the theoretical thrust of my argument. The book criticizes Western and Chinese analysts alike for essentializing China's strategic culture as uniquely peaceful. Strategic cultures may be deeply socialized, but because they are constructed and institutionalized world views, they are, in principle, changeable. I argue, therefore, against essentializing any state's strategic culture. Professor Cohen replaces an essentialist view of Chinese pacifism with an essentialist view of Chinese aggressiveness. He rules out any possibility of change, even with democratization in China.

My argument does not lead to this conclusion. Indeed, as I point out in the book, the existence of a democratic security community in Western Europe, an

area that was once the site of bloody interstate wars, suggests that realpolitik strategic cultures are not immutable. I happen to believe that a democratic China will probably be "kinder and gentler," because it will probably be treated more kindly and gently by other democracies. I also believe that China's increasing involvement in international institutions has constrained and possibly altered some of the realpolitik impulses of the Chinese state. Some Chinese officials are not only beginning to talk the talk of multilateralism but also starting to walk the walk. The emerging debate in the United States over the "China threat" has so far missed any nuanced understanding of the interactive effects of China's diplomacy and international institutions. Whatever multilateralist voices exist now in China's policy process are likely to be drowned out by hard-line reactions to a simplistic U.S. neo-containment strategy.

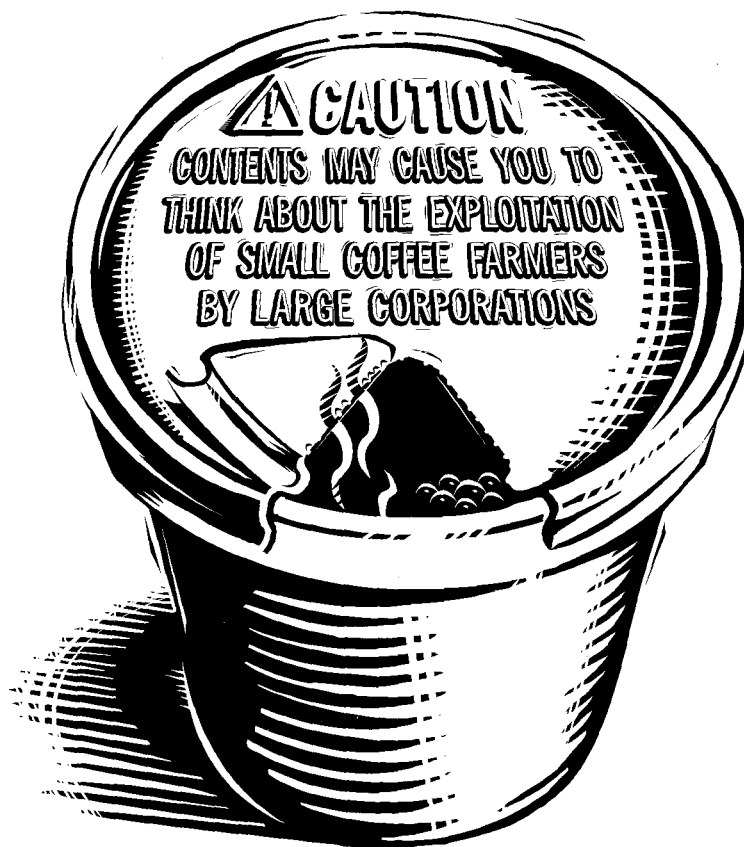
Alastair Iain Johnston
Cambridge, Mass.

Warren Cohen replies:

I regret that Professor Johnston feels that I have misinterpreted parts of his argument. He and I differ in our assessment of contemporary Chinese international behavior and how the United States might best respond, and I hope that his more sanguine view of future Chinese performance will prove correct. I see little evidence, however, for such optimism in the actions that China has taken since he wrote his very important book.

Editors' Notes

- The Word Watch column for April failed to note that the word CRIND ("card reader in dispenser") is a trademark of Gilbarco Inc. and not a generic term.
- *The Atlantic Monthly's* digital edition can be found on the World Wide Web at www.TheAtlantic.com. In June join Chandler Burr, the author of this month's cover story, "The AIDS Exception," and other experts for an online roundtable on AIDS, privacy, and the debate over public-health strategy. Readers are invited to participate in the discussion by responding in Post & Riposte, our online forum.



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THE JUNE ALMANAC

Government

June 1: Starting today, according to an ordinance passed last year, all businesses that contract their services to the city or county of San Francisco must offer health and other benefits to the unmarried domestic partners of their employees if those benefits are offered to employees' spouses. The regulation is the first of its kind in the nation, and is meant to bring contractors into line with the city's policy, adopted over the past several years, of extending benefits to domestic partners. It will affect more than 8,000 companies, social-service agencies, and municipalities. The new requirement has met with objections from a number of sources, including the Archdiocese of San Francisco, whose Catholic Charities receives city funding to provide services to AIDS patients and the homeless. The archbishop argues that it conflicts with Catholic teachings on homosexuality and on pre-marital cohabitation; accordingly, city and Church officials have agreed on vaguer wording, by which Catholic groups will extend benefits to any "legally domiciled member" of an employee's household.



The Skies

June 1: Saturn lies just above the waning crescent Moon an hour before sunrise. 13: Mars is close by the waxing Moon high in the southwest this evening. 20: Full Moon, also known this month as the Rose and Honey Moon and, among the Sioux, the Moon of Making Fat. 21: at 4:20 A.M. EDT, the Summer Solstice occurs, and summer begins. Most of the country has about five hours more of daylight now than it had in late December.

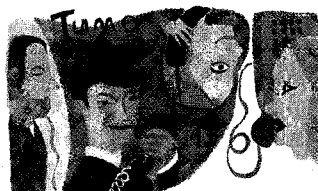


Food

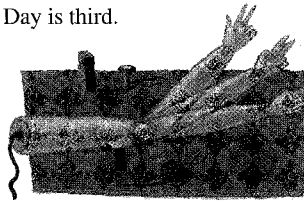
Bluefin-tuna season begins this month off the Atlantic coast. This year the western Atlantic stock of the northern bluefin appears on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' "red list" of threatened animals. The IUCN, a non-profit organization, does not have the authority to regulate catches; however, the designation could prompt tighter measures from the organization that does—the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Once considered a nuisance by fishermen, bluefin have become increasingly popular in Japan since the early 1970s, when the first one was caught off New England, fresh-frozen, and flown to Tokyo. The spawning populations of the western Atlantic bluefin have plummeted accordingly (by 1992 they had fallen to a tenth of their 1975 levels), and bluefin are now one of the most expensive fish in the ocean, selling in Japan for as much as \$80 a pound.

Demographics

June 15: Father's Day. A question many fathers will be hearing is "Will you accept the charges?" Although Father's Day ranks only third for holiday calling, behind Mother's Day and Christmas, it generates more collect calls than any other day of the year, according to the nation's largest long-distance network, AT&T (which would not say how many calls this amounts to). The reasons



may include logistic and geographic factors. Minor children of divorced parents are nearly five times as likely to live with their mothers as with their fathers; in addition, according to one report, adult children of divorced or separated parents live, on average, twice as close to their mothers as to their fathers—and thus may be more likely to incur long-distance charges when calling their fathers. There may also be a tendency among grown children to persist in thinking of their fathers as the family providers. In any case, fathers aren't alone in being dunned in this way: AT&T's second busiest day for collect calls is Mother's Day, and Valentine's Day is third.

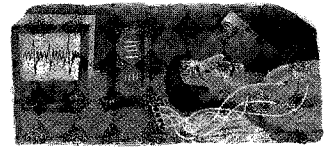


Expiring Patent

No. 4,209,167. Arm Wrestling Apparatus. "An arm wrestling apparatus including a base, an upstanding arm member pivotally connected to said base, a hand-engaging portion on the free end of said arm member, adjustable biasing means [for] pivotal movement of said upstanding arm member in one direction [and] rotatable means associated with said biasing means to control the tension therein."

Health & Safety

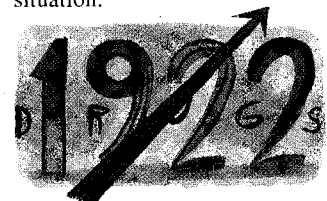
June 1: A Food and Drug Administration regulation aimed at bringing stronger quality control to the design of medium- and high-risk medical devices takes effect today. Manufacturers will be required to incorporate new checks and balances into the design process for these products, which include glucose monitors, pacemakers, ventilators, and cardiac defibrillators. Makers of glucose monitors, for example, will



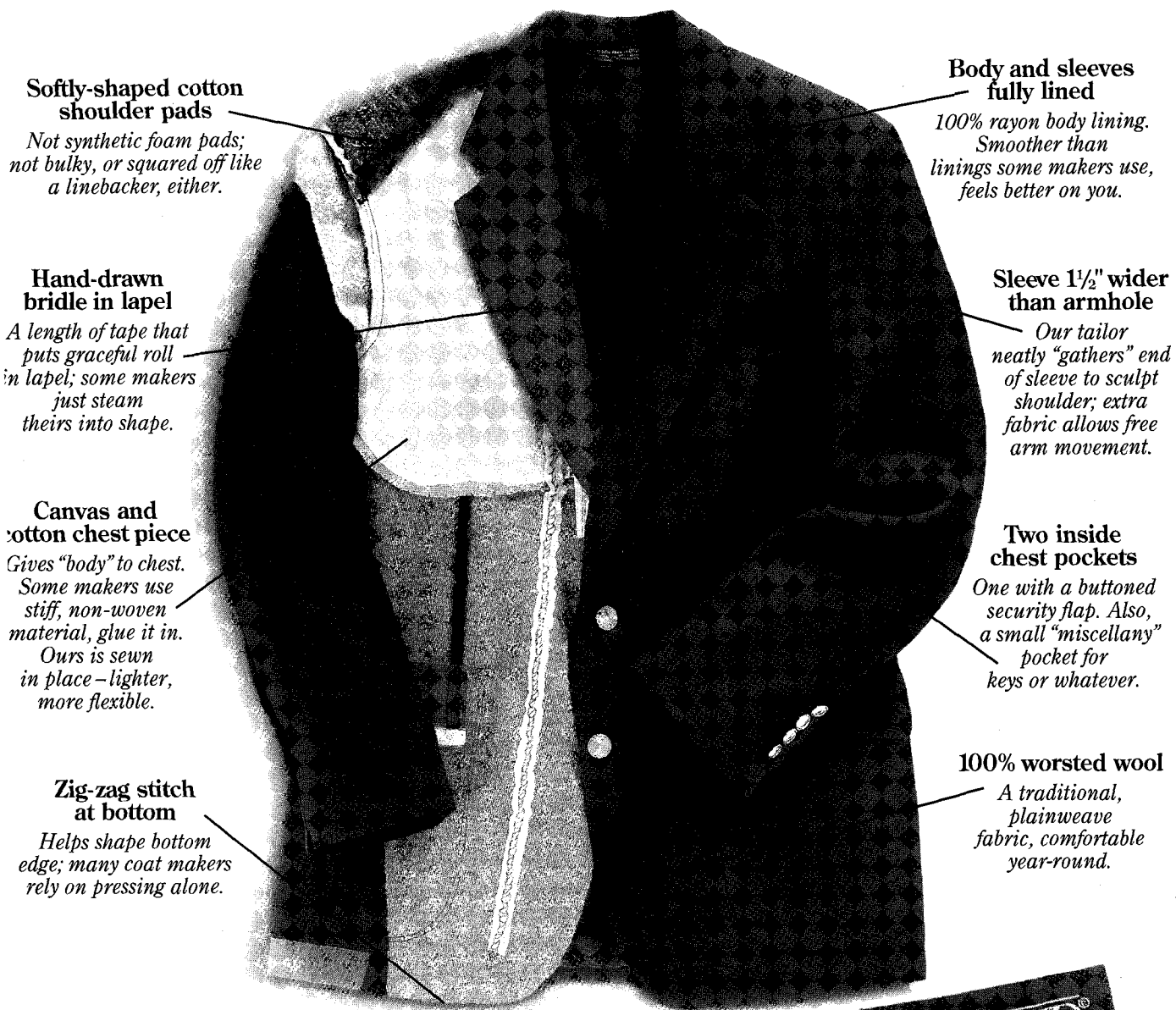
have to take into account the effects of possible electrical interference from computers, televisions, microwaves, telephones, and other home appliances and from other medical devices, and designers of defibrillators intended for use in both hospitals and ambulances will have to consider such things as storage temperatures in the ambulance, road shock and vibration, and the effects of the ambulance's siren. The new standards are intended to help limit both the dangers caused by faulty medical devices and the incidence of recalls.

75 Years Ago

Ellen N. La Motte, writing in the June, 1922, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "In America, all matters relating to public health receive careful attention. No other country gives such careful study to questions that affect it, or makes such determined efforts to improve it and raise it to a higher level. In the last few years our attention has been drawn to a condition which has now become a grave menace to our national welfare, something which is extraneous, artificial, and wholly uncalled for, yet which is assuming such proportions that we must recognize it as a threatening danger. This is the great increase of the drug habit. To meet this danger, most drastic laws regulating the sale and distribution of drugs have been in force for a number of years; yet we see these laws, theoretically perfect, totally unable to cope with the situation."



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The Positive Negative

Saying no with a smile

As places in America start to look more alike, it's strange that we still talk as differently from one another as we do. Accents, of course, remain as strong as ever, but for that there is a Darwinian explanation: a person with a colorful accent is more attractive to the opposite sex. Accents are still associated with particular places, such as the South or New England or Minnesota, because speakers have acquired the way they talk from people who acquired it from people born there long ago. More puzzling are variations of inflection and usage that have a vaguer geography—the way we pronounce the names of the days of the week, for example. In official speech, on TV and radio, in many cities, the days of the week are pronounced with a full final syllable: “Sun-day,” “Mon-day,” “Tues-day,” and so forth. But in certain contexts people say the days of the week like this: “Sundi,” “Mondi,” “Tuesdi,” “Wensdi,” “Thursdi,” “Frydi,” with the final vowel contracted to a briskly spoken long *e*. Saturday is further contracted to “Seardi.” Wandering lines on the map could indicate where “Monday” left off and “Mondi” began, such as in far suburban New York and points west, maybe. Social class or aspiration provides another clue; swells like Marylou Whitney and Brooke Astor generally do not say “I’ll be comin’ back on Seardi.” Overall, I would say that the contracted form is more common than not. Almost everyone in Michigan says “Seardi,” maybe even Lee Iacocca. I used to do an imitation of a person standing in a Dairy Queen and jingling coins in his pants pocket and saying, “Let’s have a chocolate sundi! Don’t that sundi look good? Are you gonna have a sundi? I’m gonna have a sundi!” People with mid-American accents tend to say “sundi,” while people on the edges usually don’t. Maybe the pronunciation dates from when families got together for a big mid-day meal, called a dinner, every Sunday. “Sun-day dinner” is more awkward to

say than “Sundi-dinner.” And maybe the pronunciation spread to the other days of the week in inner parts of the country, where having Sunday dinner was more of a big deal. (I admit this is only a theory.)

My favorite American speech anomaly is a usage I call the Positive Negative. Again, its occurrence is vaguely geographic, but it also seems to fit with certain personality types all over. Normally the negative is expressed by the word “no.”

But for some people, and in some places, “no” is not part of the vocabulary. Instead speakers use an upbeat substitute that nevertheless conveys the same meaning—hence the “Positive Negative.”

For example, if you go into a convenience store to buy some cat food and you can’t find it on the shelves, and you ask the salesperson if they have any cat food, he or she will reply, cheerful as can be, “We sure don’t!” The last word is spoken with a rising inflection, as if the expression were a positive one ending with the word “do.” Sometimes the “sure” is accented with a regretful but still good-humored shake of the head. Indeed, “sure” is the key word in the phrase, all but submerging the negative meaning in a surge of straightforwardness and certainty. The Positive Negative may be adapted

by Ian Frazier





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to any situation in which the answer is no: "Will you be back later?" "I sure won't!" "Can you give my car a jump?" "I sure can't!" "Are you the owner?" "I'm sure not!"

My local bakery, which could be called the Sure Don't Bakery after its employees' affection for the phrase, has even managed to express the Positive Negative in a one-word sign. When the bakery is open, a large sign on the door says YEP! When it's closed, a sign of equal size says NOPE! And although if I pull into the parking lot and see that NOPE!, the net effect is negative (I've gone to the trouble of turning in here, and I'm not going to get my sunflower bread), still I feel a strange warmth very unlike the bleak, empty, hot-dog-wrapper-blowing-along-the-deserted-boardwalk feeling conveyed by the simple and more common non-Positive Negative word "Closed." It's as if we were such an optimistic people that everything we said had to be expressed by "Yes"—even "No." In the state where I live—a western state, with big skies and sprawling subdivisions—on certain roads under certain conditions there is no speed limit. The signs on those roads don't come out and say that, however. They post a daytime limit for trucks and a nighttime limit for everybody, and leave the driver to figure out the rest. And on roadside billboards advertising motels sometimes a neon YES lets travelers know that rooms are available—a convenience, except when YES is not illuminated,

and the traveler notices only the billboard and exits the highway and goes to the motel and asks if they have any rooms, and the desk clerk happily replies, "We sure don't!"

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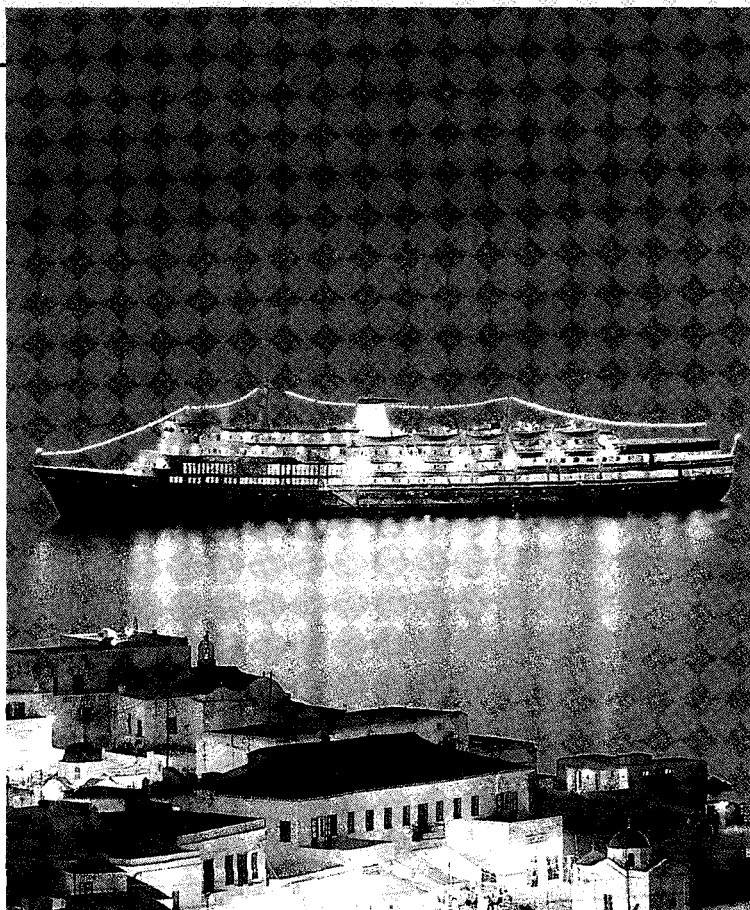
I once took a course from the great Shakespearean scholar Harry Levin, who said "uh" a lot when he lectured: "We see the uh-uh-uh-uh frequent use of lunar imagery in uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." A friend and I always sat together and counted the "uhs" with vertical strokes bundled by diagonal strokes into bunches of five. At the end of each class we compared our totals, which were usually pretty close. I remembered not one sensible word Levin said, and of course I did not do well on the exam. Twenty years later I happened across an essay by Levin on *Coriolanus* and was surprised at how interesting and coherent it was. That's the problem—certain weirdnesses of speech can obsess me so that I hear nothing else. Now, with "sure don't" often I'm listening for it even before it comes out of the person's mouth. Some places where I know I'll never hear it—in an Indian restaurant, in Mexico City, at a gallery opening in Soho—I can relax. But in other, hard-to-predict situations—maybe in a shoe store just down the street from the gallery, maybe in a mall a thousand miles west—I sense its presence, and I go on the alert like a "sure don't" connoisseur. A few days ago a woman in front of me in line at the liquor store asked the sales clerk if he had a cardboard box for her to carry her purchases in, and when he said it, I wanted to jump the counter and officially welcome him to my "sure don't" life list. My hand shook with suppressed excitement as I distractedly wrote him a check for the wrong amount. Shared language creates a common space, even if that space is hard to pin down on any map. I always get a thrill when I find I've crossed the shifty border into "sure don't" America. ☞



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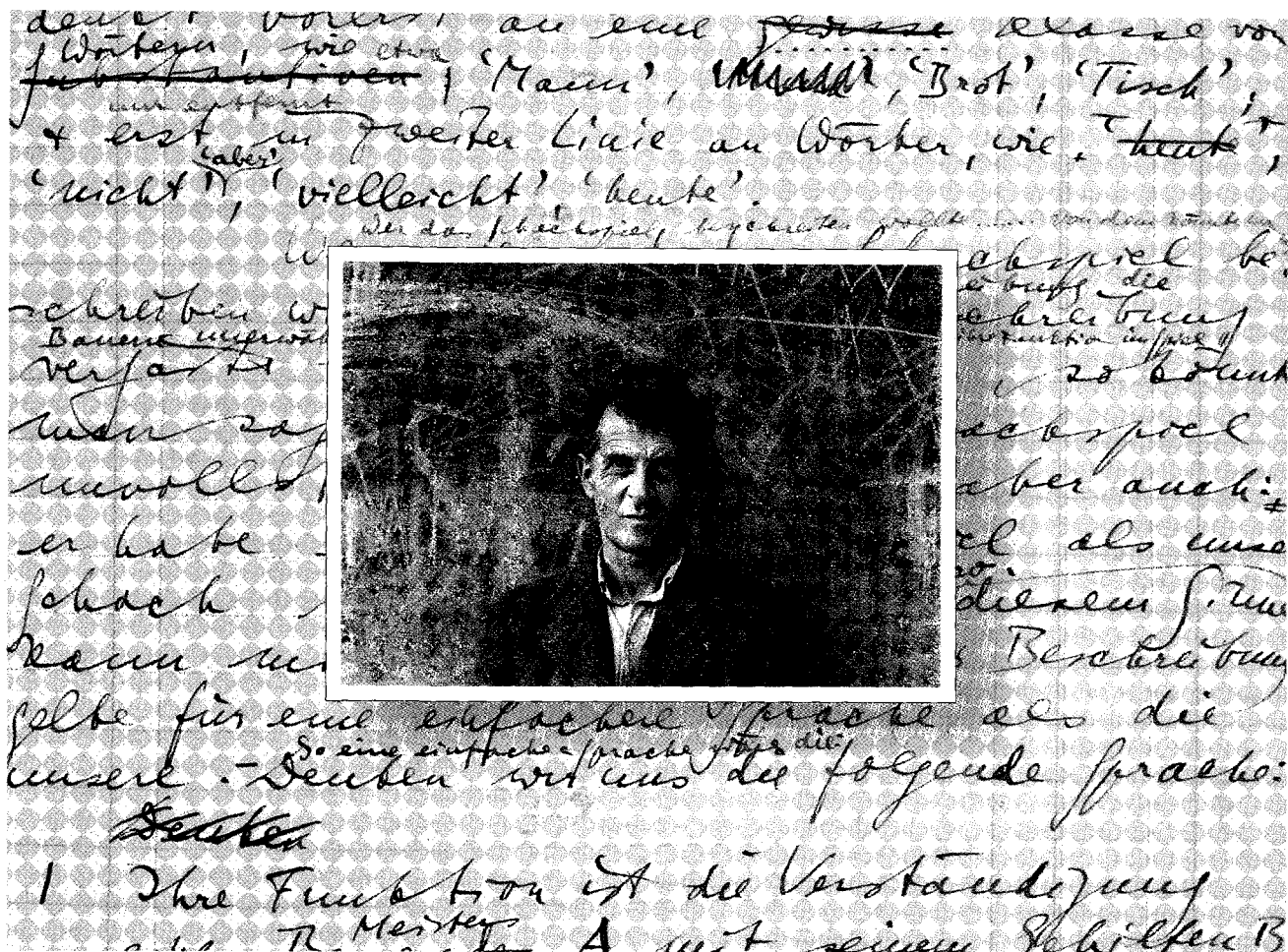


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BOTH PHOTOGRAPHS: WITTGENSTEIN ARCHIVE

The Wittgenstein Controversy

The dispute over the first complete edition of the philosopher's papers is as petty and academic as Wittgenstein himself was high-minded and profound

MICHAEL Nedo, the director of the Wittgenstein Archive, in Cambridge, England, is a happy man. The archive is deeply in debt, the building is in dire need of repair, and complications in Austrian politics have delayed any chance of getting further funding. But Nedo is at last

on the way to accomplishing what he set out to do more than two decades ago: he has issued six volumes of Ludwig Wittgenstein's papers, in exactly the form and sequence that Wittgenstein wrote them, and several more volumes are in preparation.

This is the first time since the philoso-

pher's death, in 1951, that anything he wrote has been published in unaltered, unedited form. As Nedo puts it, "Wittgenstein's own connections, which he himself called the most important thing in his work, have been restored." One might expect a certain amount of scholarly rejoicing. But the saga of these papers, and of Nedo's beleaguered edition in particular, is so fraught with petty squabbling and bad blood that except for reviewers in the nonacademic press, nobody has mustered even one faint cheer.

Not that such wrangling over the papers of dead philosophers is as rare as one might expect. Ever since Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche edited her brother's final manuscripts (and in some cases actually forged whole passages) to reflect her own anti-Semitic and fascist views, it

Above, Ludwig Wittgenstein and an auto-graph page from the Philosophical Investigations

by Evelyn Toynton



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has become almost a tradition in the philosophical community to suspect the editors, colleagues, or relatives of philosophers of nefarious behavior with their literary remains. Thus rumors abound concerning the manuscripts of Charles Sanders Peirce, George Santayana, and Martin Heidegger, to name just a few.

Yet the Wittgenstein wars seem especially unfortunate, if only because Wittgenstein himself was a moral purist of the highest order: a man who abandoned all the worldly honors—and worldly goods—that had been bestowed on him in order to lead what he called a “decent” life. After serving as a volunteer soldier in the armies of his native Austria during the First World War, he gave away the vast fortune he had inherited and spent years teaching peasant children in the poorest of alpine villages. Having tried and failed to get work as an ambulance driver at the front during the Second World War, he left his professorship at Trinity College, Cambridge, to serve as a porter in a London hospital. If his genius inspired reverence in the likes of Bertrand Russell and John Maynard Keynes, his personal history has made him a hero even to some who hardly know his work.

The fate of his manuscripts is also distressing because of the ratio of what he published to what he left behind. Such was his perfectionism that during his lifetime he published only a single book, of seventy-four pages. This was the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), which altered the practice of philosophy, perhaps forever, by calling into question the ability of language to talk about ethical and metaphysical questions in any meaningful way. Wittgenstein maintained that language could only *show*; it

The Wittgenstein wars seem especially unfortunate, if only because Wittgenstein himself was a moral purist of the highest order.



could not say anything that went beyond description: “Most propositions and questions, that have been written about philosophical matters, are not false, but senseless. . . . Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” To establish the limits of what could be spoken of, he stripped language down to its logical structure, which he saw as mirroring that of reality.

Believing that the *Tractatus* had cleared up all the confusions that “tormented” philosophy, Wittgenstein decided it would never be necessary for him to write anything further. After his six-year stint as a schoolteacher, he worked for a time as an undergardener in a monastery, and seriously considered becoming a monk. But in 1929 some of his Cambridge admirers—chief among them Keynes, who occasionally referred to Wittgenstein as “God”—persuaded him to return to the university to teach, and he began to rethink the problems he thought he had solved. Though he was adamantly opposed to their being widely circulated, a set of notes he dictated to his students during the thirties once again spawned whole new lines of philosophical inquiry.

In those notes—designated the *Blue and Brown Books*, after the colors of the notebooks in which they were first taken down—Wittgenstein abandoned his earlier quest for a logically perfect language

*Michael Nedo
at the
Wittgenstein
Archive on
opening day*

to consider how language acquires meaning through use, the multiple ways it functions “in the stream of life.” When the *Blue and Brown Books* were passed around, in crudely stenciled form, the general view was that he had revolutionized philosophy for the second time, although some claimed that he had killed it for the second time—by rendering permanently suspect any writing about the good, the true, and the beautiful.

Apart from his work on language, he also wrote about the foundations of mathematics, about color, and about the idea of certainty. When he died of cancer, at the age of sixty-two, he bequeathed nearly 30,000 pages of manuscript—many of them handwritten, almost all in German—to three of his former students, with instructions to publish “as many of my unpublished writings as they think fit.” It was, on the face of it, a simple enough request. But as soon as his trustees began issuing posthumous volumes, the accusations started flying.

FACED with a huge mass of repetitive, unwieldy material that, in Wittgenstein’s characteristic style, mostly took the form of discrete remarks rather than sequential argument, the trustees struggled to give it a conventional linear form. Whole chapters were omitted, with connections provided by passages from unrelated manuscripts; paragraphs written many years apart might appear on the same page. “A medley of materials from different sources, which were never intended by Wittgenstein to go together,” one scholar thundered, while a reviewer called another volume “simply useless for scholarly studies of the development of Wittgenstein’s thought.”

The trustees’ motives were also impugned, if not in print then in a hundred faculty lounges. Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, the chairman of the philosophy department at Dartmouth, and one of the more genial of the trustees’ critics, says, “There were several ex-students of Wittgenstein’s who made careers out of lecturing on the mysterious ‘unknown writings’ that nobody else had seen. The trustees hung on to their power by doling out information in dribs and drabs, while refusing people access to the manuscripts.”

Professor Jaakko Hintikka, of Boston University, exempts one of the trustees,



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*A full-scale mutiny
broke out, with the
philosophers impugning
both Michael
Nedo's character and
his competence.*

Georg Henrik von Wright, from blame, but questions the motives of the other two: "Only a psychiatrist could say what Rush Rhees and Elizabeth Anscombe were really trying to accomplish. Their whole identity was vested in being Wittgenstein's interpreters. If everybody had access to his papers, their own interpretations might have been disproved."

The issue of access was a sore point for years, especially when the trustees permitted a microfilm version of the manuscripts to be issued but put strips of white paper over certain coded personal remarks. Conjecture about Wittgenstein's philosophical positions was accompanied by even more rampant conjecture about his sex life, particularly after one scholar published a book alleging that Wittgenstein had compulsively cruised a park in Vienna, picking up homosexual toughs, while he was training to be a teacher. (Although the scholar's evidence was later convincingly refuted, such stories continue to circulate.)

But things really heated up only in the seventies, when the trustees did what so many in the philosophical community had been urging all along: they authorized a complete edition of the manuscripts. At this point Michael Nedo became involved.

As a young physics student at the University of Tübingen, in Germany, Nedo had developed a passionate admiration for Wittgenstein. This prompted him to write to Rush Rhees querying a discrepancy in one of the diagrams of the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), the most important of the posthumous volumes and the only one that Wittgenstein himself had prepared for publication (though the trustees appended another manuscript to the work when

it was published, thereby provoking more criticism). After initially claiming that the mistake had appeared in Wittgenstein's version, too, something that Nedo doggedly insisted was impossible, Rhees checked the original manuscript and discovered that Nedo was right. The two men embarked on a long correspondence about the problems with the printed volumes, and when the time came to appoint someone to oversee the transcription of the papers, Nedo, who had gone on to do graduate work in physics and zoology and was a researcher at the Max Planck Institute, was chosen. He put together a team of philosophers to help him, and the project was launched, with a small grant, at Tübingen. Originally Nedo saw his work on the papers as something he could do part-time while pursuing his own scientific research, but it soon became evident that this was impossible, and he devoted himself to the edition.

What happened next may have been caused partly by resentment among the philosophers: Nedo had no professional qualifications in philosophy, yet he had been placed in charge. Or it may have been the result of Nedo's combination of obsessiveness, absentmindedness, and lack of regard for such things as schedules and budgets. At any rate, the philosophers questioned his fitness for the task, and questioned it even more strenuously when he refused to let them write their own scholarly footnotes to the edition—he wanted it to consist of Wittgenstein's words alone. Finally, a full-scale mutiny broke out, with the philosophers impugning both Nedo's character and his competence, and hinting, among other things, that his Ph.D.s in physics and zoology were fictitious.

The trustees, however, gave their support to Nedo and the contract that he had signed with them. Although this only increased the hostility in the philosophical community, the day was saved for the pure-text edition. The project was transferred from Tübingen to Trinity College, Cambridge, and Nedo uprooted himself and moved to England.

At that point 15,000 pages of manuscript had already been transcribed from Wittgenstein's hand, but the computer disks disappeared at the time of the anti-Nedo crusade. Various lawsuits and countersuits were set in motion; it turned out that Nedo's former colleagues had

smuggled the 15,000 pages to Norway, where the Norwegian Wittgenstein Project, a group of Norwegian scholars, sought to produce a computer-readable edition. The story goes that Anscombe demanded the disks back, and the Norwegians refused to return them; supposedly, the disks are still sitting in a bank vault somewhere in Norway, though no one will admit to knowing where. In 1991 another Norwegian team, this time at the University of Bergen, was granted permission to produce a CD-ROM version, which is scheduled to appear toward the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Nedo began the process of transcription all over again, and promised to have the edition ready for the centenary of Wittgenstein's birth, in 1989. But by the late 1980s, when Rush Rhees died, Nedo had still not published a single volume. He had several ready, he says, but the trustees were not satisfied with their typographic quality, a problem he ascribes to the shortage of funds and to the difficulties the manuscripts presented: an idiosyncratic notational system, myriad cross-references, and an unconventional structure. "The structure of the manuscripts themselves was especially complicated," Nedo says, "because Wittgenstein's thinking and writing were very musical, so you have structures and forms that are more common to music than to texts. When he comes to the borderline of his language, his sentences often break apart; one sentence ends and he produces a parallel second sentence that somehow oscillates around the idea of the first. These sets of sentences remind one of a partita where, in order to express something, one has to use different tunes."

Nedo devoted a great deal of time to designing a typographic format that would make for a readable text, and he insisted on having special software developed that would allow many different variants to be presented simultaneously, with each given a different weight. In his view, such time-consuming efforts were justified by the result: the software that he and Desmond Schmidt, a Cambridge Ph.D. in classical philology, developed at the archive is infinitely more sophisticated, Nedo says, than anything developed elsewhere, and could be used for all sorts of scholarly editorial projects.

But while Anscombe continued to sup-
(Continued on page 40)

JUNE
1997

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

PREVIEW

Film

Love! Valour!
and Jason
Alexander!

Dance

Balanchine's
Midsummer
Night's Dream

Theater

Plays That
Have Gone
to the Dogs

Classical

Opera's
Notorious
Duchess

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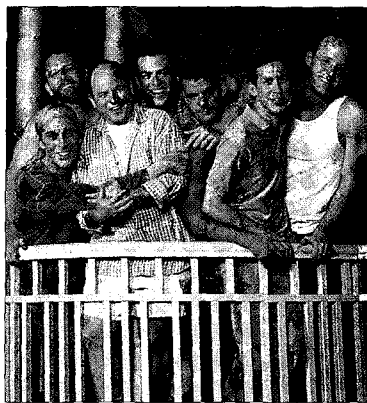
DODGE

Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

BARING IT ALL AT THE COUNTRY HOUSE

Other than to showcase a lovely Victorian country house, there was no compelling reason to bring Terrence McNally's talky hit play, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, to the big screen. Still, Joe Mantello, who directed both the stage and the screen version, has fashioned a funny and affecting, if visually undemanding, film out of a work that's 90 percent banter and 10 percent philosophy. (McNally himself wrote the screenplay.) The original off-Broadway cast returns, with the addition of *Seinfeld*'s Jason Alexander, to play a group of gay men who gather for three Chekhovian weekends at the idyllic home of a choreographer friend. At least two of the men have AIDS, yet *Love! Valour! Compassion!* is more a rumination on the quandaries of love and friendship than a disease movie. Love in the shadow of AIDS, McNally suggests through the



Alexander and the original cast

struggles of these men, is as fraught with human frailty as love outside it, though the disease compels a special inventiveness of the human spirit. McNally is candid about the specifics of gay culture—Alexander in particular gives a wonderfully flamboyant performance without ever lapsing into cliché—while underscoring the universality of the men's troubles. Granted, the playwright creates a rather pat moral universe with a well-worn conceit of twin brothers (both played by Tony Award-winning actor John Glover), one good, one bad. The evil twin is a direct descendant of the tortured men in *The Boys in the Band*, one of the first openly gay mainstream movies. Yet the pride and sympathy with which McNally treats his characters reminds us how far gay life and gay film have come since that bitterly self-lacerating film.

GOLD STANDARD

Several years ago the director Victor Nunez made *Ruby in Paradise*, a small pearl of a film starring Ashley Judd as a young working-class Florida woman trying to make her way in the world. Nunez's latest film, *Ulee's Gold*, doesn't quite achieve the serene, elliptical assurance of that movie, but it comes close. Set in the tupelo marshes of the Florida panhandle, the movie stars Peter Fonda (lined, stooped, balding, and a far cry from *Easy Rider*) as Ulysses Jackson, a righteous but unforgiving beekeeper who's far happier among his honeycombs than around people. Still, Ulee cares for his two granddaughters, Casey (Jessie Biel) and



Ulee at peace tending his beehives

Penny (Vanessa Zima), who were left alone when their father, Jimmy (Tom Wood), went to jail and their mother, Helen (Christine Dunford), ran off with Jimmy's fellow thugs. When Ulee is called upon to retrieve the doped-up Helen from Jimmy's former accomplices, who have their own agenda for Ulee, his orderly, hermetically sealed life falls apart. *Ulee's Gold* doesn't need the heavy plotting or the symbolic Greek names (Ulysses, Penny, Helen) to prop up its project, which is to observe the density of Ulee's temperament in what he says and doesn't say, and what he does and doesn't do. In Nunez's work character is all, and though his people are always troubled, a deep repose that slows the heart works its way into his stories (there is real joy in watching Ulee move about his beehives) and brings to the moviegoer the same equivocal peace achieved by the characters. *Ulee's Gold* is a lovely film about a family repairing itself, and about the dignity of labor.

Ella Taylor is a film critic for LA Weekly.

STAYIN' ALIVE, JAPANESE STYLE



The dancing duo

More often than not, dance movies are morality plays about the extraneous passions—love, lust, the drive to win—that people invest in performance, and how those involved are brought to love the activity for its own sake. So it is with Japanese writer and director Masayuki Suo's *Shall We Dance?*, a quietly goofy film (no *Strictly Ballroom*, this) about a suburban married accountant with a severe case of midlife ennui who signs up for ballroom-dancing classes in order to get closer to a beautiful but remote teacher with troubles of her own. You can see the crisis and the redemption

of each coming a mile off (both must learn that life is with people, not with fantasies), but it hardly matters. The strength and charm of *Shall We Dance?* lie in its details—Suo's wry and puckish observation of the incongruities (and similarities) between the restrained formality of Japanese culture and the garish formality of ballroom dancing and its underlying commentary on the corrosive role of shame and embarrassment in Japanese life, both private and public.

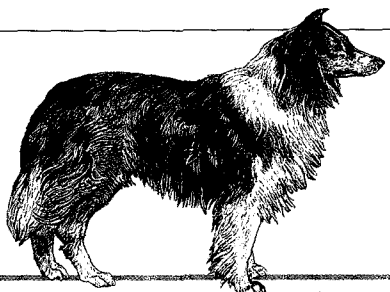
Koji Yakusyo in *Shall We Dance?*

BOB SEBREE

MIRAMAX

Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND NANCY DALVA



METHOD BARKING

Watching *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is like riffling through early drafts of Shakespeare's later and better comedies, from mellow masterpieces (*Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*) and harsh "problem plays" (*All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*) to valedictory romances (*Cymbeline*, *Pericles*). One scene, though, bears the paw print of genius: the diatribe of the servingman Launce against his dog, Crab, who sees his master hounded by misfortune yet sheds not a single compassionate tear. The monologue is a comic jewel but a tricky one for the actor. Last winter, when the new Anglo-American ensemble Shakespeare's Globe, London, paid its first visit to New York, the mutt walked away with the reviews. Whether he sat and scratched himself or cocked an ear or wandered off to make a friend in the



The Globe's production of *Two Gents*

first row, it all had the glow of fresh inspiration. Wily thespians beware beasts (and children), whose naïveté will blow away hardworking professionalism every time. The point will surely be borne out this summer when *Two Gentlemen* shows up in a new production at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Crab will again seem an Olivier among canines, whereas in truth the genius is the playwright, whose lines miraculously anticipate and accommodate animal behavior of any kind (June 12–October 11; 541-482-4331). —A.B.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Nancy Dalva is working on a series of essays on Merce Cunningham.

THE PUCKISH DELIGHT OF FAIRIES AND SPRITES

Thirty-five years ago George Balanchine was on a romantic roll. Just two years before, he had choreographed his sublime, melting *Liebesleider Walzer*. Now, using the same

perfect design team (unsurpassed for candle-lit, moonlit, nacreous effects) of David Hays (decor) and Karinska (costumes), the great Mr. B. made Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into a two-act story ballet, notable for any number of marvelous elements. Among them: the Mendelssohn score (pieced together by Balanchine from a variety of works), which conjures up exactly the fireflies and fairies Balanchine makes material; the swiftly paced narrative, which tells the entire tale without a scintilla of old-fashioned mime—every effect is danced, and with nary a moment of longueur; the original cast, which included Arthur Mitchell as Puck, and also Jillana, Edward Villella, Francisco Moncion, Patricia McBride, Bill Carter, Violette Verdy, and Conrad Ludlow (some playing the fairies and some the mortals, but each immortal in the dance world); and, perhaps most important and telling, a deep feeling for the language of the original, here alchemically trans-



The spirit of the play in dance

formed into the poetics of ballet. As a child Balanchine not only saw the play but appeared in it, as an elf in a production at the Mikhailovsky Theatre, in St. Petersburg, when he was eight. Many of

its lines stayed with him, and as an adult he could recite (in Russian) many of the speeches. (He seemed particularly to like Oberon's "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows...") He said of his work, "I think it is possible to see and enjoy the ballet without know-

ing the play. At least that was my hope in creating the piece." So, also, is it possible to see and enjoy the ballet while already loving the play. The New York City Ballet offers *Midsummer* at Lincoln Center the week of June 24–29, bringing Shakespeare's green world to the big concrete city; then, wonderfully, the green world will remove to the countryside, to Saratoga, New York, where one can revel in its magic on July 15, 17 (matinee and evening), and 18. (Tickets for Lincoln Center, 212-870-5570; for Saratoga, 518-587-3330.) Casting will be announced one week in advance and posted on the company Web site: www.nycballet.com. —N.D.

THE GIRL WHO CRIED "WOOF"

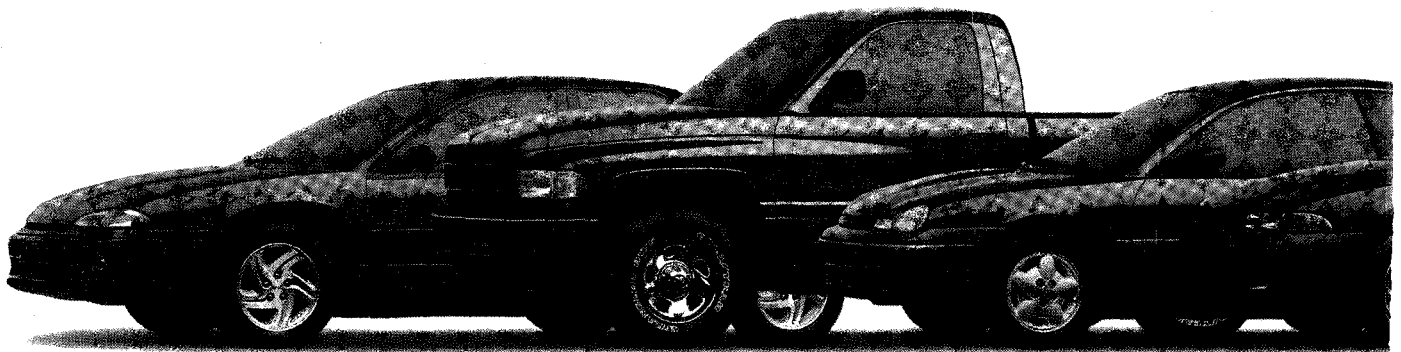
The title character of A. R. Gurney's *Sylvia*, originally portrayed by Sarah Jessica Parker, in all her leggy, kooky beauty, wanders off the street into the apparently stable marriage of two Manhattan professionals and resets the course of their lives. A *ménage à trois*? Yes, but the homewrecker is a dog, endowed with the unconditional love, territorial animosity, and undomesticated biological needs of her species. Luckily for actress and audience, she dresses like a human being

and speaks English, though inevitably communications entail a good deal of mutual misunderstanding. Those spectators who harbor pets no doubt draw different conclusions from those who don't, but both persuasions seem to recognize Gurney's generous comic vision as poetically true to life. After making the rounds of numerous regional stages, *Sylvia* now moves in at the Unicorn Theatre, the company that brings up-to-date titles to Kansas City (June 4–19; 816-531-7529). —A.B.

Parker as a man's best friend



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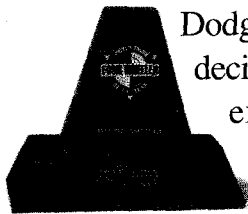


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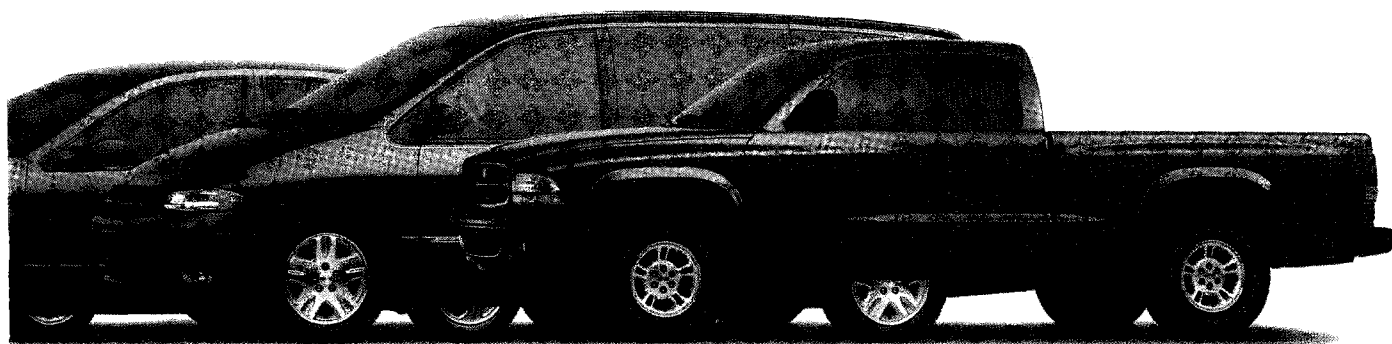
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Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND INFAMOUS

If word gets out, there will be no hotter ticket at this year's Aspen Music Festival than the Aspen Opera Theater Center's American stage premiere of *Powder Her Face* (July 25, 28; 970-925-9024). At the center of the web glitters the insatiable sexual predator Margaret, Duchess of Argyll, whose lurid real-life career peaked in perhaps the most notorious divorce trial of the century. It sounds like the latest instantly forgettable tabloid-opera, but it's not at all. *Powder Her Face* is to all that as a vintage Dom Pérignon is to Andrés Cold Duck. Written to a sharp, literate, yet singable libretto by Philip Hensher, this first opera by the prodigiously gifted Englishman Thomas Adès (born 1971) unfolds with a vitality and assurance that proclaim a born master. Nothing follows received formula, yet all is exhilaratingly clear—clear and in some sense unfath-



She's the top, the Duchess of Argyll

omable. With a cast of four (many roles are doubled) and a chamber orchestra of fifteen, Adès conjures up a world of scintillating corruption. Infectious cabaret rhythms and threads of silken melody woven through the score bring to life a whole society. The writing is fiendishly skillful, extravagantly beautiful. Not a gesture is thrown away. Some passages are romantic, sleazy, and cheeky all at once. Elsewhere strings tickle the ear like mosquitoes' wings, or shimmer, still audible, over the infernal ruckus of drums.

Many theorists deny that music possesses moral qualities, yet Adès's virtuosity conspires with Hensher's words to keep false pieties at bay: the hypocrisy and vanity of the Duchess's antagonists and of the scandal-hungry public are stripped away as ruthlessly as her own. No one mends his ways. She, at least, has the class not to apologize, not to explain.

FESTIVE FINALE—ONE NIGHT IN PARIS

Quietly but steadily the New York Festival of Song has been building a loyal following. Festivity in this case is a function not of scale but of approach. The venues—the 92nd Street Y and Weill Hall, upstairs at Carnegie Hall—are intimate, as befits the programming, which celebrates the art of song in all its infinite variety. The artistic directors Steven Blier and Michael Barrett (both pianists, Barrett also a conductor) draw no needless distinctions between classical and popular material. Jerome Kern and Kurt Weill are as much a part of the family as Dmitri Shostakovich and Richard Strauss. Sophisticated enjoyment is the goal, pursued so far this season in five concerts with an inviting potpourri of themes: the lyrics of Ira Gershwin, contemporary life in America, the progress of love, Russian romance and politics, and witty Brits. In these recitals the vocal duties are always shared,

by at least two artists and often by more, which creates a convivial air—as does Blier's frequent impromptu commentary from the stage. A few of the artists each season enjoy high name recognition (Tyne Daly, Claire Bloom); most do not, though some are plainly stars in the making (Audra McDonald, Cyndia Sieden, Rodney Gilfry). The season finale, "Paris at Night," fields, among others, Frederica von Stade and the Leonard Bernstein protégé Kurt Ollman performing cabaret material associated with the likes of Edith Piaf and Jacques Brel (June 4; 212-996-1100).

Secrets like this are hard to keep, and tickets will be hard to come by. If shut out or otherwise unable to attend, call now to get on next season's mailing list.

Barrett and Blier

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

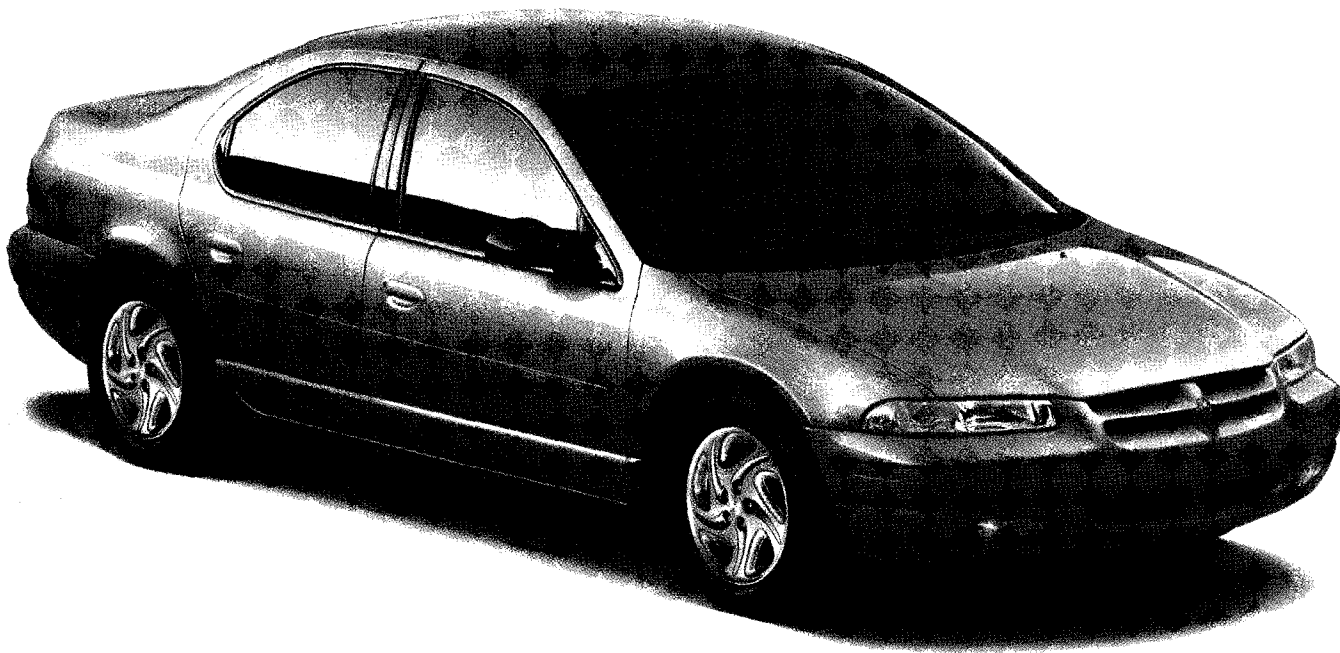


DAWN OF CREATION

For all but historicists Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607) is the first opera that matters. You know the story. Orpheus descends to the underworld to bring back his beloved Eurydice, but turns back to see her before regaining the light, thus losing her forever. For our ears (as, surely, for Monteverdi's original audiences) the most "modern" passage, which is to say the one most spiked and fractured with intensity and surprise, comes with a messenger's narrative of the heroine's death. More "antique" is Orfeo's appeal to the ferryman for the dead, a burst of vocalism staggering in its virtuosity yet full of heart-felt pathos, too. Of course the full magic unfolds only when the words carry as potent a charge as the music. Unlike the many companies that now resort to supertitles, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis performs exclusively in English, putting its faith in the diction of the singers. The title role in *Orfeo* has been entrusted to Gregory Turay, a young tenor and just the sort of artist to realize Monteverdi's aims (June 17-27; 314-961-0644).

DODGE

Tune in to The History Channel in June for *True Action Adventures*, a series devoted to real-life footage of humankind's struggles, and failures, against nature and overwhelming odds. The travels of Lawrence of Arabia, the sinking of the *Bismarck*, the quest for speed, the race to the moon, and the expeditions to the poles are just a few of the topics covered in this series, which had access to 250,000 hours of archival film. Dodge is proud to sponsor this month's Arts and Entertainment Preview and innovative programming like *True Action Adventures* (on June 11 at 9:00 P.M.).



It helped to have a few control freaks on staff.

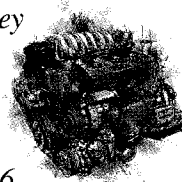
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(Continued from page 32)

port Nedo, his critics argued that more-complex texts had successfully been transcribed and transferred to the computer in a much shorter time. Jaakko Hintikka, the most vocal of this group, accused Nedo of misrepresenting his progress on grant applications and of having wasted years and vast sums of money by failing "to use any of the available resources for the purpose of software development." In an article in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, Anthony Kenny, one of the two men appointed by the other trustees to replace Rush Rhees, claimed that Nedo had spent "long periods of time designing software for formatting the pages to be printed according to his own taste."

By the time Nedo was finally ready to publish his first volume, the trustees had withdrawn their support for his edition. He was deprived of his fellowship and his elegant office at Trinity, and his contract for publication of the papers was revoked. It was expected that he would give up on the project entirely. But such a thing seems never to have occurred to Nedo, whose belief in the importance of the edition is absolute: "In such impoverished times as these, when creativity has virtually collapsed, all we have to guide us is what was produced by the great minds of the past; only by cherishing these things, and making them available as they were written, can we hope to climb out of the mess we are in." He set about finding his own funding, his own premises, and his own publisher.

TODAY the Wittgenstein Archive is housed in an austere concrete building on a Cambridge side street, lent to Nedo by the noted British architect Colin St. John Wilson. The garden around the place is decidedly overgrown, there being no money for maintenance; the operation's budget is being shored up by an overdraft from the bank and by a mortgage that Nedo took out on his own house. But the reviews of his edition (known as the Wiener Ausgabe, the Vienna Edition, because it is published by Springer Verlag, of Vienna) have been glowing.

A piece that appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1995 praised the Vienna Edition for "combining readability with accuracy, elegance with lavish detail. It will be a valuable source to scholars, an



The archive's austere interior and neglected garden

example to philologists, and a pleasure to bibliophiles. . . . It discharges an immensely difficult and ambitious task."

A review in the *San Francisco Chronicle* further observed, "The existing bilingual editions of Wittgenstein exaggerate the break between his earlier and later thought. The *Vienna Edition*, austere beautiful in its large format, promises to restore the inner continuity of Wittgenstein's philosophy."

In fact, one of Nedo's chief purposes is to convince people, through publication of the crucial "transitional" manuscripts of 1929–1933, that the *Philosophical Investigations* is not a direct repudiation of the *Tractatus*, as is almost universally believed, but a matter of going from general to specific rules about language. Nedo points out that Wittgenstein himself wanted the two books to be published in a single volume, with an epigraph reading "It's generally the way with progress that it looks much greater than it really is." He also insists that the repetitions in the manuscripts are by no means superfluous but rather are crucial to an understanding of Wittgenstein's thought; placed in a different context, the same remark becomes something quite different. Again, he quotes Wittgenstein: "In philosophy matters are not simple enough for us to say 'Let's get a rough idea,' for we do not know the country except by

knowing the connections between the roads. So I suggest repetition as a means of surveying the connections."

Finally, Nedo hopes that his edition will convince people of the importance of Wittgenstein's work on the foundations of mathematics and the moral implications it has for scientists. Here, too, he supports his view with a quotation from Wittgenstein; when asked during the forties to comment on an entry about him in a biographical dictionary, the philosopher added just one sentence: "Wittgenstein's chief contribution has been in the philosophy of mathematics."

But if Nedo is content that the Vienna Edition—which he wants to extend to include all Wittgenstein's writings, along with a concordance to the manuscripts—is at last making it possible to understand "the complex structure of Wittgenstein's thought," his academic detractors are far from granting him the point. After years of complaining bitterly about Nedo's delays, many have decided that his edition is superfluous anyway; rather than wading through page after page of repetitive text, they await the search capabilities and cross-referencing potential of the complete CD-ROM version.

Logical though this sounds, it is a little suspect that few of Michael Nedo's critics seem to have been curious enough even to look at the Vienna Edition—as though, if they were actually to see it, they might have to give Nedo some credit after all. Indeed, the professors sometimes seem more interested in airing their grievances than in talking about anything Wittgenstein himself may have written.

And that, of course, is the great irony here—that a man whose own preoccupations were so fiercely high-minded

*By the time Nedo
was finally ready to
publish his first
volume, the trustees
had withdrawn their
support of his edition*

should have spawned such an orgy of pettiness. But then, it is a gloomy fact that since his death Wittgenstein seems to have become the victim of everything he hated most. This is true not only in the academy but also among all the legions of his supposed admirers. Having made it his moral purpose to "clarify the use of our language," he is the subject of some of the most impenetrable prose ever written. Having warred against pretentiousness of every kind, he is routinely hauled in to lend credence to some of the most pretentious cultural artifacts of our time.

In the art world especially, where conceptual artists have adopted him as their guru, he seems doomed to a perpetual afterlife of misappropriation. Thus a piece consisting of four sheets of glass propped up against a gallery wall, with the words CLEAR SQUARE GLASS LEANING written on them, is called by the artist a "Proposition," after those of the *Tractatus*, and is said to "work with Ludwig Wittgenstein's analytic philosophy of language" to "stimulate the spiritual faculties of the individual as a dialectical, culturally located counterpart." Works that consist of the scrawled or flashing words "Pay attention mother fuckers" and "Fuck and live. Suck and die" are claimed by a curator at the Museum of Modern Art to go "directly to the heart of the existential problem Wittgenstein's inquiries pose. . . . Nauman's [the artist's] method has much in common with that of Ludwig Wittgenstein. . . . Whether videos, neons, drawings, prints or spatial constructions, each of his works asks the same question: how does being resonate in language?"

The uninitiated viewer may have trouble seeing how a Bruce Nauman work called *Shit in Your Hat—Head on a Chair* asks that question. Equally, it is hard to fathom why a neon sign that said RUN FROM FEAR. FUN FROM REAR is said to have been praised by a critic for its "Wittgensteinian synchronicity." Such, however, are the uses of philosophy in our time.

It seems unlikely that the Vienna Edition—or the CD-ROM version of the manuscripts, for that matter—will deter this sort of thing, any more than it will stop the philosophers from grumbling. But at least it will finally be possible, for those who are interested, to find out exactly what Wittgenstein said, and when he said it. ☞

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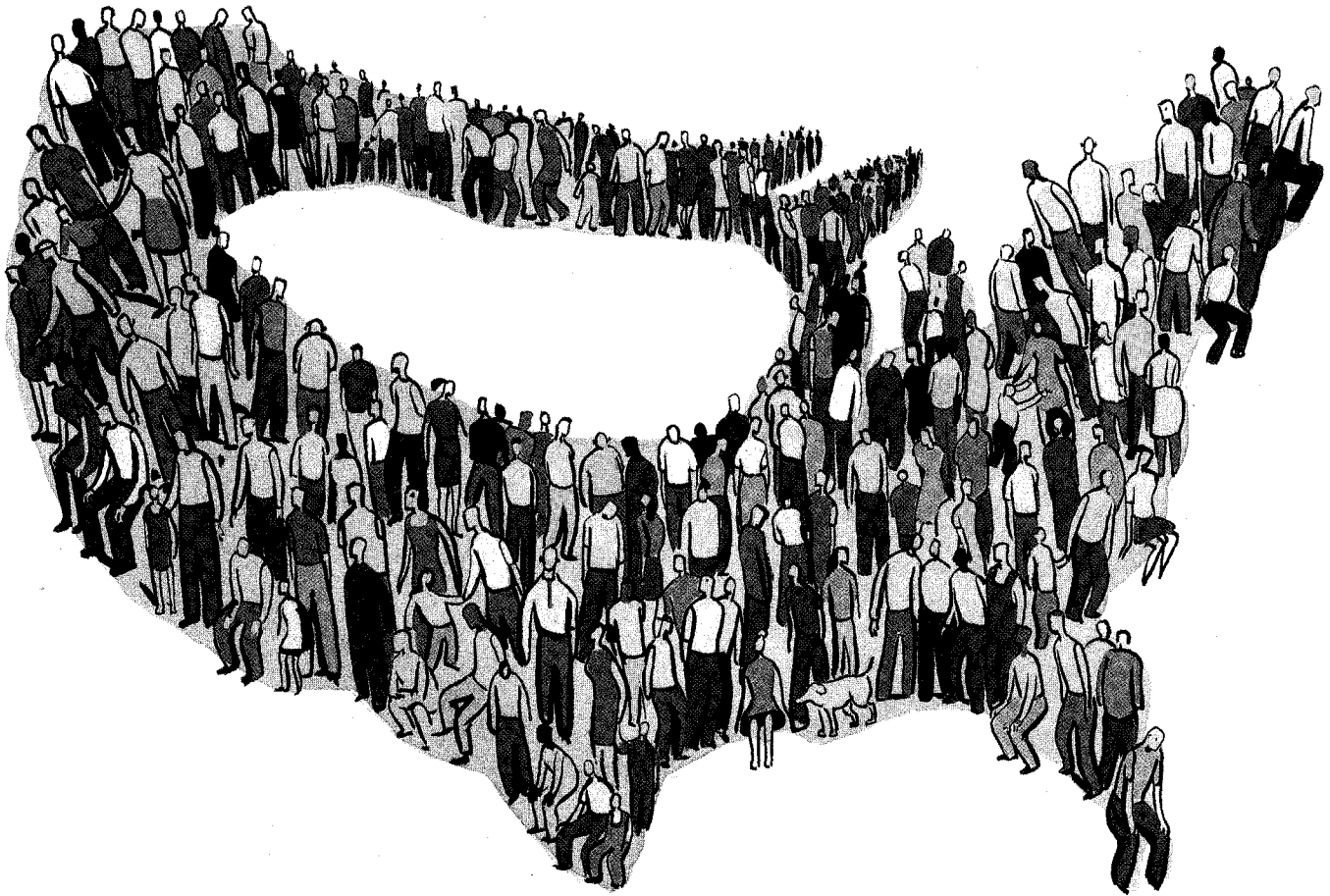
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Slow Death in the Great Plains

A sizable swath of the country's heartland is undergoing a severe drop in births that, if it continues, could empty many small towns in just one generation

OVER the past two decades a strange phenomenon has become clear in much of the center of the United States: people have almost stopped having children. Several factors may explain this. Much of the Baby Boom generation has finished having children, and its successors, known unimaginatively as Generation X, have

by Harlow A. Hyde

delayed having children and chosen to have much smaller families. These facts, which apply to the country as a whole, acquire ominous dimensions when considered alongside the "rural flight" away from the Midwest which began in the 1930s and continues today. The problem is far from just local: the area suffering from this reverse

baby boom comprises 279 counties in six states, totaling nearly 470,000 square miles. Included are Wyoming and Montana, most of North and South Dakota, three fourths of Nebraska, and more than half of Kansas. In the past ten years 16 percent of the lower forty-eight states has seen barely one percent of the nation's births.

The region is already underpopulated. As a whole, the 279 counties average only six people per square mile, according to the 1990 census. Even this average would be lower were it not for a few comparatively populous places, such as Hall County, Nebraska, which is served by an interstate highway and is thus a center of trade; in 1990 it had ninety-one people per square mile. In that census half the counties had fewer than four people per square mile and nineteen counties had fewer than one. In contrast, New Jersey has nearly 1,100, and three New England states taken together average more than 750. This area can ill afford the economic and social

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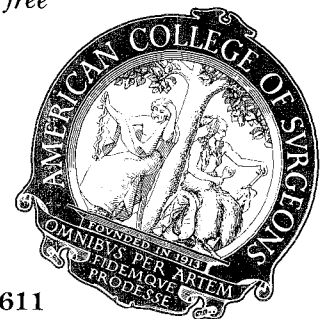
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consequences of a lost generation of unborn children. When it comes time to pass the torch to the next generation, too few hands will be waiting.

After the end of the Second World War the Baby Boom began: in 1946, 3.4 million births were recorded in the United States. The annual total climbed, and from 1954 through 1964 births averaged 4.2 million. Then, during the next dozen years, births declined nationally. The low period was 1973 through 1976, when they barely exceeded 3.1 million a year. The national decline was only temporary, however: by 1977 the number of births began to rise, and in 1989 it again exceeded 4 million. Births remained above 4 million through 1993, and the Census Bureau projects that they will remain at about 3.9 million through 2005.

But in the six-state region the situation has been different. Even the Baby Boom was not as pronounced here; it peaked earlier and the subsequent decline was greater. The region in fact experienced a "baby bust" for nearly fifteen years, from about 1965 through the late 1970s. Nationally births declined 27 percent, from the peak of 4.3 million in 1957 to a low of just over 3.1 million in 1973. But, taking each state's peak and low years from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s, in Nebraska births declined 34 percent, in Kansas 40 percent, in South Dakota 42 percent, and in North Dakota 44 percent.

An upswing in the region mirroring that in the country as a whole has failed to occur. Births in these counties rose slightly from about 1979 through 1984—a period known locally as the "Baby Boom echo," resulting from the

original Baby Boomers' reaching their peak childbearing years. In reality the rise was barely a blip. In North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska not a single year of this "echo" saw as many births as even the slowest year of the Baby Boom.

By 1985 births had begun to fall throughout the region, and the decline has accelerated since 1990. It has been greatest in rural areas, with the 98th Meridian serving as an approximate dividing line. The portions of North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas west of this line have experienced an unprecedented "child drought" during the past ten years, and the birth rate for the past five years amounts to a child famine.

Consider Loup County, in central Nebraska, whose residents gave birth to twenty-two to twenty-nine children each year for fifteen consecutive years during the Baby Boom. In 1995, *one* child was born. Similarly, the residents of Hayes County, Nebraska, had up to seventy-two births a year during the Baby Boom. In 1995, five children were born to the county's residents. In 1951, 185 children were born to residents of Hitchcock County, Nebraska; in 1995, twenty-six children were born. And these counties are not isolated examples. During the first ten years of the Baby Boom the residents of the fifty-nine Nebraska counties west (or mostly west) of the 98th Meridian averaged more than 12,000 births a year. In 1994 and 1995 births to residents of those counties, which cover more than 58,000 square miles, totaled fewer than 6,000 a year.

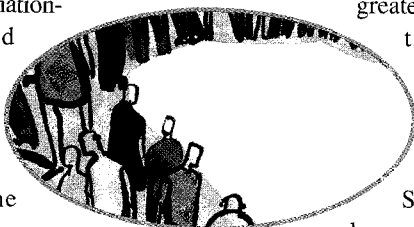
This dismal picture has very few exceptions. Three or four of Nebraska's rural counties have bucked the trend, thanks to the interstate highway system, which has helped connect them to more-populated areas, and thus has slowed rural flight. Births to residents of those counties have stabilized at 10 to 30 percent below prior levels. But the highway makes very little difference to most of the counties in the western half of the state, which remain isolated and underpopulated. And Nebraska has not even had the greatest declines in this six-state region.

Births in North and South Dakota fell still further. In much of North Dakota the declines are apocalyptic: From 1947 through 1956 annual births averaged more than 17,000, but in 1995 they totaled only 8,479—a decline by half. Births to residents of twenty-eight of the state's fifty-three counties declined by more than three quarters, and in only seven counties did they decline by less than half. In 1995 births in South Dakota totaled fewer than 10,500—fewer than in any year of the Depression.

The situation in Wyoming is nearly as bad. With more than 97,000 square miles, Wyoming invariably produces fewer children a year than Washington D.C., which has only sixty-one square miles. Montana is also suffering a drought of children.

Kansas, the most populous of the six states, has experienced some of the greatest declines. Consider, for example, Russell County, the home of Bob Dole. What has happened to Russell County, smack-dab in the middle of Kansas, is typical of dozens of counties. During the five-year period from 1949 to 1953 Russell County saw an average of 356 births a year. From 1991 to 1995 annual births have averaged only seventy-four—a decline of more than 79 percent. Russell County is not a throwaway, back-roads, dead-end place with no history and no hope. What happens to Russell County, and other counties, matters—both to Kansas and to the social fabric of the whole country. With only seventy-four children born a year, Russell County will be hard put to hold on to the gains of the past century. It's as if much of the great central breadbasket of North America had been ordered to downsize and rid itself of more than half its work force and social structure during the next thirty years.

BELYING any sense of crisis, most towns in this region seem prosperous. This is true because much of the population is still in its prime: the oldest Baby Boomers turned fifty last year, and a majority of the cohort is thirty-five to forty-nine years old. They may be finished or nearly finished having children, but that hardly means they have one foot in the grave. The problem is that the next generation is not being sown: in 2025 who will do the reaping? And will there be anything left to reap?



In 1995 births in South Dakota totaled fewer than 10,500—fewer than in any year of the Depression.

Any village, town, county, culture, or other social unit is just one generation away from extinction.

With fewer children, schools will be closed and consolidated. As the population drops, the Postal Service will close post offices. Government at all levels will reduce staff. Elks Clubs and American Legion posts will close, as will movie theaters and barber shops. Churches with dwindling memberships will be unable to support a pastor. In many towns the clinic or hospital will close, owing to a lack of patients and an inability to retain doctors. The effects of reduced economic input will ripple through the local economy—particularly in rural areas, where people depend on one another. As the cutbacks continue, the value of real estate will plummet. Adding to the problem, in fifteen years Baby Boomers will begin to retire. Many will move to Omaha, Wichita, Denver, or even Texas. WOOFs (well-off older folks) will seek easier climes, and houses in many small towns will go begging. A similar fate awaits commercial property.

The colleges throughout the region will also suffer from declining birth rates. College and university enrollments will be high over the short term, because of the comparatively large number of children born during the “echo” years. In recent decades college towns have been insulated from the ebb and flow of the economy. By 2010, however, enrollments will decline substantially.

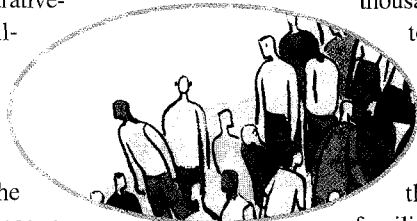
Without doubt the decline in births will gradually drain the life out of the region. Children are the key to holding society together. Any village, town, county, culture, or other social unit is just one generation from extinction. Without more children, the aging social fabric will fray and finally fall apart.

Economists and sociologists teach that there are critical masses—minimum numbers below which essential “synergisms” break down. These synergisms build and sustain communities. A community built on a hundred births a year cannot remain cemented if births drop (and stay) below fifty a year. The areas in which births have declined by more than half are destined to undergo profound changes within a generation. For some communities the changes will begin within a decade.

Fighting the decline may be like opposing old age: the fight may be unwinnable in any case. Decades of attempts to attract new residents, by competing for industry, agricultural development, tourism, and access to large highways, have, with a few exceptions, been unsuccessful. It may be best just to get out of Dodge while the getting is good. If Russell, Kansas, and hundreds of similar communities are going to turn into ghost towns within thirty to fifty years, perhaps the wisest choice is simply to pack up now. In the years ahead some communities will struggle valiantly against uncertain odds; many others will die with barely a whimper.

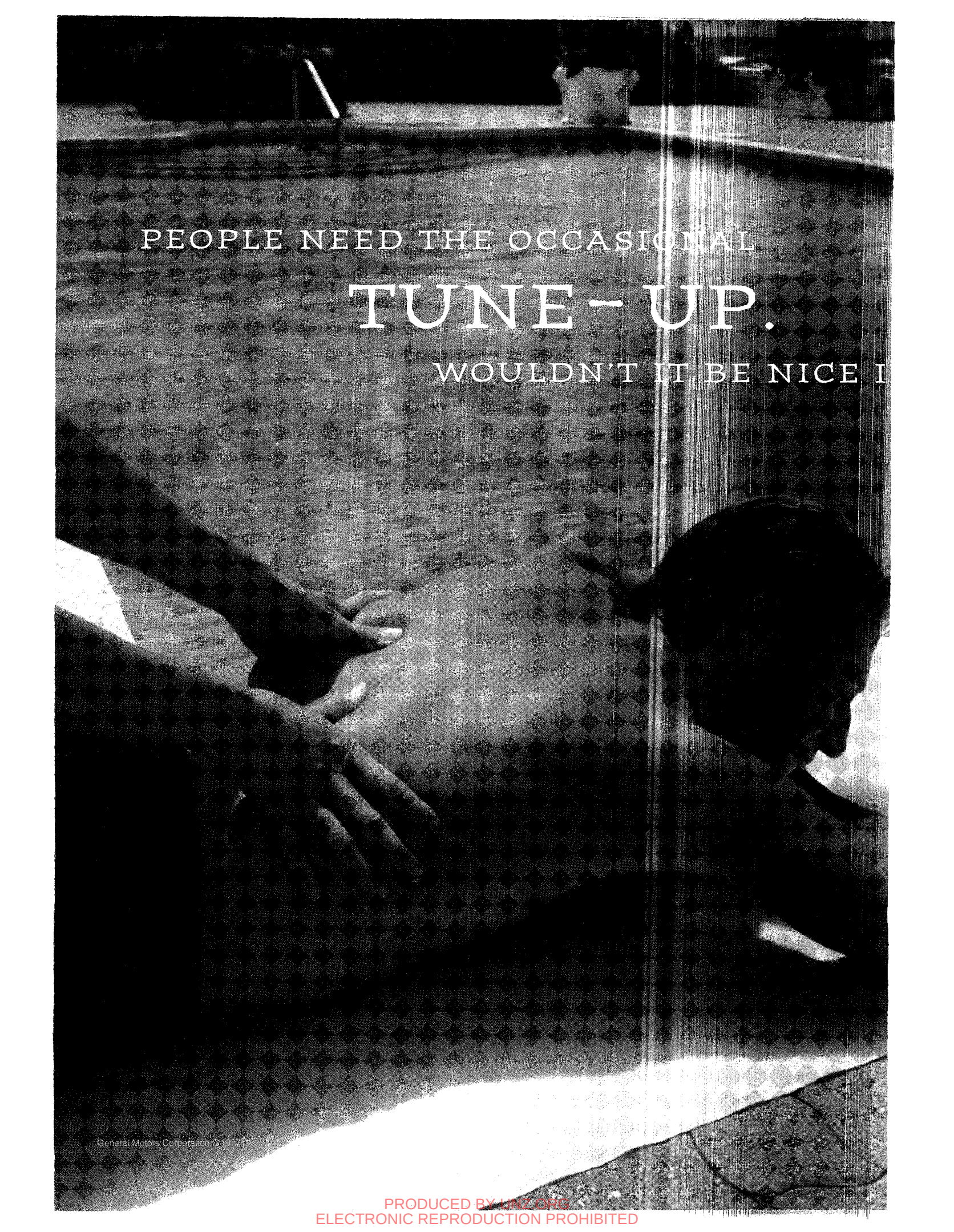
The Great Plains were the land of opportunity, the home of legions of pilgrims and seekers. These brave souls were the heroes of O. E. Rölvag’s *Giants in the Earth* and Willa Cather’s *O Pioneers!* They lived in conditions we would consider unthinkable, suffering years and even generations of hardship, deprivation, and poverty, often working themselves to death. Progress was at first glacial; the drought of the 1890s ruined thousands. But the survivors toiled on, unwilling to admit the possibility of defeat. And over the past hundred years some of the nation’s strongest families and finest communities have resulted from that toil.

No one can pretend that the lack of children is not critical. The present decline in births condemns the future: any kind of economic development relies on a number of children sufficient to fill the next generation. If anything can help the future of these 279 counties, it is the decision by Baby Boomers and their children to have another baby. ☪



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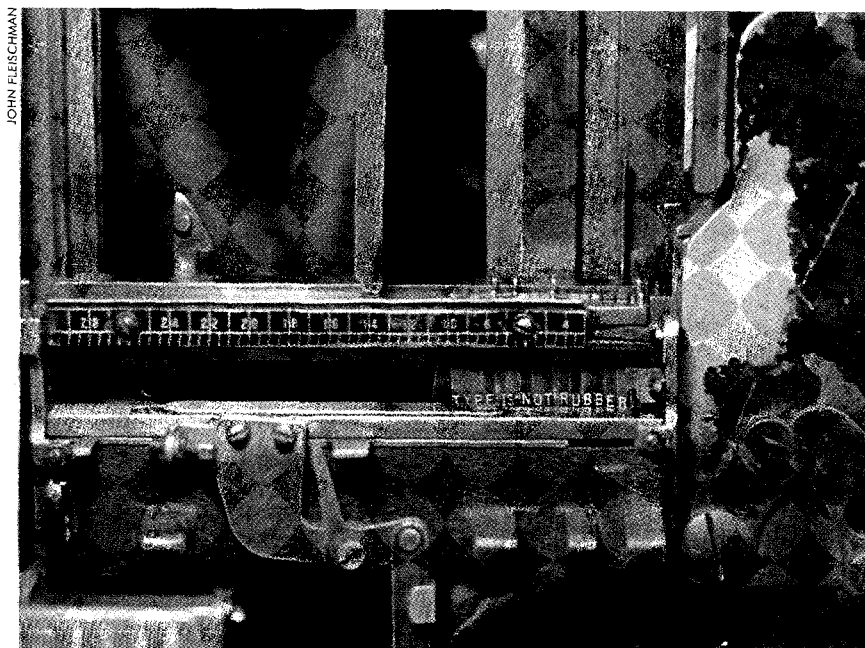
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Late Edition

The mighty Miehle, a letterpress the size of a truck, which for thirty years printed the news for Yellow Springs, Ohio, falls victim to the computer

PASSING through Yellow Springs, Ohio, not long ago, I couldn't stay out of the alley that leads to the *News* office. I had to see for myself that the Miehle was really gone after the big reshuffle. The renovation had eaten up the old back shop where for the past thirty years the *Yellow Springs News* had been printed by the Miehle, a sheet-fed flatbed-cylinder press manufactured around 1907. The

Miehle, which started with a bang and had an electric motor the size of a beer keg kicking over a cast-iron cylinder the diameter of a wagon wheel, certainly took up space. The *News*, a fiercely independent weekly in a small college town near Dayton, certainly needed new offices—and the revenue from a new retail tenant. Still, I was disoriented. The cavernous pressroom had vanished in a maze

of new Sheetrock. The *Yellow Springs News* now goes to press in another town. It took some squinting around partitions to figure out where the Miehle once stood, but no effort to recall it.

Once, the press had a whole estate—the Fourth—to itself. "WORKING PRESS" read the badge that let reporters through the barricades at fires, elections, and executions. Electronics was still a sideshow as late as 1960, when the *New Yorker* press critic A. J. Liebling coined the dictum "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." What guarantees remain is an interesting question, yet until I tried to give away an honest-to-goodness working press, I didn't realize how far the terms of the debate had shifted.

Long ago I saw the first words for which I was paid emerge from the

Miehle's inky heart. A letterpress, a machine that printed from raised metal type, was a mechanical wonder of moving rods, rollers, and cylinders. Truly hot off the press, the printed sheets floated down into the Miehle's receiving box, copy after copy—my words, my words. So when Amy Harper, the editor and a part owner of the *News*, called a few years ago to ask if I knew anyone who wanted a printing press as big as a good-sized truck, I felt obliged to help put the Miehle safely out to pasture. The *News* had persisted with the Miehle and the traditional craft of "hot-lead" printing long after virtually every other American paper had gone over to computers and offset printing. When Harper called, the Miehle had already been retired for two years from its weekly press run. It would be free to a good home, she said, provided the new owners would take it away. Otherwise it would go to the junkyard.

Over the next months Harper and I spent far too much time imploring complete strangers to take in an old newspaper press. We badgered museums, historical societies, printing experts, hobbyists, and the Smithsonian Institution, without luck. We had near misses: the Miehle was exactly thirty inches too long to fit into a new display at the Ohio Historical Society, in Columbus; it was seven years too young for a nineteenth-century historical village near Cleveland; it was too common a model to interest the Smithsonian's Division of Graphic Arts. And we had one disaster: an offer from a printing museum in Keithsburg, Illinois, was washed out by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1993.

The Miehle was not just another obsolete machine; it represented an entire technology—indeed, a way of life for 500 years. Around 1450 Johannes Gutenberg discovered how to cast lead printing type from metal molds. The individual letters could be assembled and reassembled into words, sentences, paragraphs, even an entire Bible. Fastened tightly together, the letters could be inked and pressed into paper over and over. The letterpress spread across fifteenth-century Europe faster than anything else except the plague. One expert has calculated that in the forty-five years after Gutenberg

by John Fleischman

printed his famous Bible. 1,120 printing offices in 260 different towns in seventeen European countries turned out 10 million copies of 40,000 different works.

Presses, typesetting, and picture reproduction improved over the centuries, but Gutenberg's root technology—printing from raised metal letters—remained the same right up to the late 1960s, when I first walked into the back shop of the *Yellow Springs News*. In retrospect I can see how the *News* became an industrial anachronism, but at the time, the back shop looked the way most newspaper back shops did—noisy, dirty, and on deadline.

The *News* was edited by a Christian pacifist who abhorred racism and the sale of packaged liquor, and was printed by a Quaker war resister whose wife had spelled him at the press while he served twenty months in federal prison for his beliefs. Kieth Howard, the editor, and Ken Champney, the printer-publisher, saw their newspaper as being of a piece with their beliefs. They put their business faith in a dying technology because it suited them perfectly. It needed little capital and much labor. What was obsolescent elsewhere made their lives easier in Yellow Springs.

Indeed, over the next few years the *News* snapped up some amazing machines—scarcely worn but suddenly obsolete—at fire-sale prices, as bigger newspapers abandoned letterpress. The *News* was sustained by the fact that investment in this obsolete equipment required only a small amount of capital and by the willingness of its “mechanical” employees to put in long hours at lower wages to use it. “What one makes per hour at work is not the key factor,” Lynton Appleberry, a legendary typesetter at the *News*, told me. “It’s how many hours you do work. You don’t have millions of dollars tied up in presses. You divide up any money that’s around and you do it because you like to do it.”

Appleberry liked to run a Linotype—a typesetting machine—and he was a legend at the keyboard because he improved copy. Especially in the days when the *News* was setting college newspapers, Appleberry would silently fix spelling, sort out wandering clauses, and impose agreement in number and tense. He also inserted, without warning, his “Linotypist’s Notes”—parenthetical glosses un-

der that heading to fill in a news story’s missing but vital background. Computers long ago learned to spell. Someday they may know grammar. They will never write a Linotypist’s Note.

THE paper operated in an extended-family spirit, employing generations of kids, restless journeymen, and countercultural types who were good with their hands. Getting the paper out was all that mattered to the *News* regulars, who tended to favor the simple life, organic gardening, and technology they could afford and control.

In the end it was human skill that failed, not the Miehle. As the letterpress printers retired from the *News*, there was no one to replace them. And no one had the heart to talk some kid into apprenticing as a linotyper in the 1990s. Also, the price of the new technology dropped. The computers that now set type and send out the bills at the *News* are relatively cheaper than new Linotypes were in their day. Of course, buying an offset press for the *News* is out of the question. Owning a press, owning any capital investment of that size today, is like living with a tiger in a studio apartment—you must feed it constantly.

When A. J. Liebling cast his famous pearl about owning a press, he was worried that the chains would buy up papers across the country, eviscerate local distinctiveness, and crank out high-profit, low-journalism baloney. As far as I can see, that’s pretty much what happened. It didn’t happen in Yellow Springs, partly because the *News* did own its own press, free and clear, for so many years.

Swimming against the tide of technology left the *News* unencumbered with huge debt. When ownership passed, control of the *News* stayed local, partly because the new owners provided themselves as human capital, and partly because there wasn’t a lot to fight over. That was the Miehle’s gift to Yellow Springs. It kept a small-town paper in small-town hands. A hired bean counter would say that the *News* building, formerly the garage of a long-defunct Chevrolet dealership, was the only significant asset. That would ignore the real franchise—the habit of being this peculiar town’s peculiar newspaper for so long. The Miehle is gone, but that franchise continues.

AMY Harper is the latest editor and part-owner. Editing a feisty country weekly, Harper says, is fairly stressful and not terribly well paid, but she puts out a distinctive paper. It reflects Yellow Springs, a liberal and slightly bohemian island in a sea of midwestern corn and conservatism. The *News* runs about two or three times as much news as the average “community” paper. Every word is locally written. But even with computers, labor is still the biggest cost, and with an offset printer’s bill to pay as well, the *News* couldn’t afford to pasture the superannuated press indefinitely on rentable floor space. So it fell to Harper to show the Miehle the door.

Finally Harper told me that not even the junkyard was keen on taking the Miehle. Its beautiful cast-iron machinery had no value as scrap. At this dark moment the printers’ grapevine brought us John Wilcox, a consulting mechanical engineer from Delaware, Ohio, who had a collection of antique machines. The fundamental science of engineering is lifting heavy things, so with hand jacks, rollers, and next to no assistance, Wilcox whisked the Miehle out the alley door and onto his stake-bed truck. Back at home he reassembled the Miehle in a storage building. At last report he had just found a new power source to drive it.

I was both grateful and sad. The Miehle had been snatched back from rusty death, but there was no bringing back its usefulness as a working press. Once, the Miehle had been essential to Yellow Springs. In memory I can still hear it stamping out the issue each Wednesday afternoon. One such afternoon long ago an eerie silence from the pressroom drew me down the alley, where I found the makeup man fuming idly by the composing stone. A letterpress page was made up of hundreds of pieces of metal—Linotype slugs, headline type, rules, and engraving blocks. All had to be fitted together in a metal frame called a chase and locked tight for the press. A missing story was a literal hole in the page, and the makeup man was standing by the stone with his fist in the middle of the front page. In the editor’s office a poetic friend of Kieth Howard’s was wrestling with the last stanza of an ode to autumn. “We’re holding,” said the disgusted makeup man, “for a late-breaking poem.” That was freedom of the press. ☘



GAVRIEL JECAN/TONY STONE IMAGES

Transylvania Today

*This part of the world isn't just
for Dracula buffs*

BRAM Stoker, whose *Dracula* was published a century ago, called Transylvania "one of the wildest and least-known portions of Europe," and probably these characteristics led him to choose it as the setting of his Gothic novel. Even today the "land beyond the forest" reposes in relative obscurity, off the Western tourist routes now leading from Vienna to Budapest and Munich to Prague. Still largely medieval in façade, Transylvania is perfect terrain for those desirous of journeying

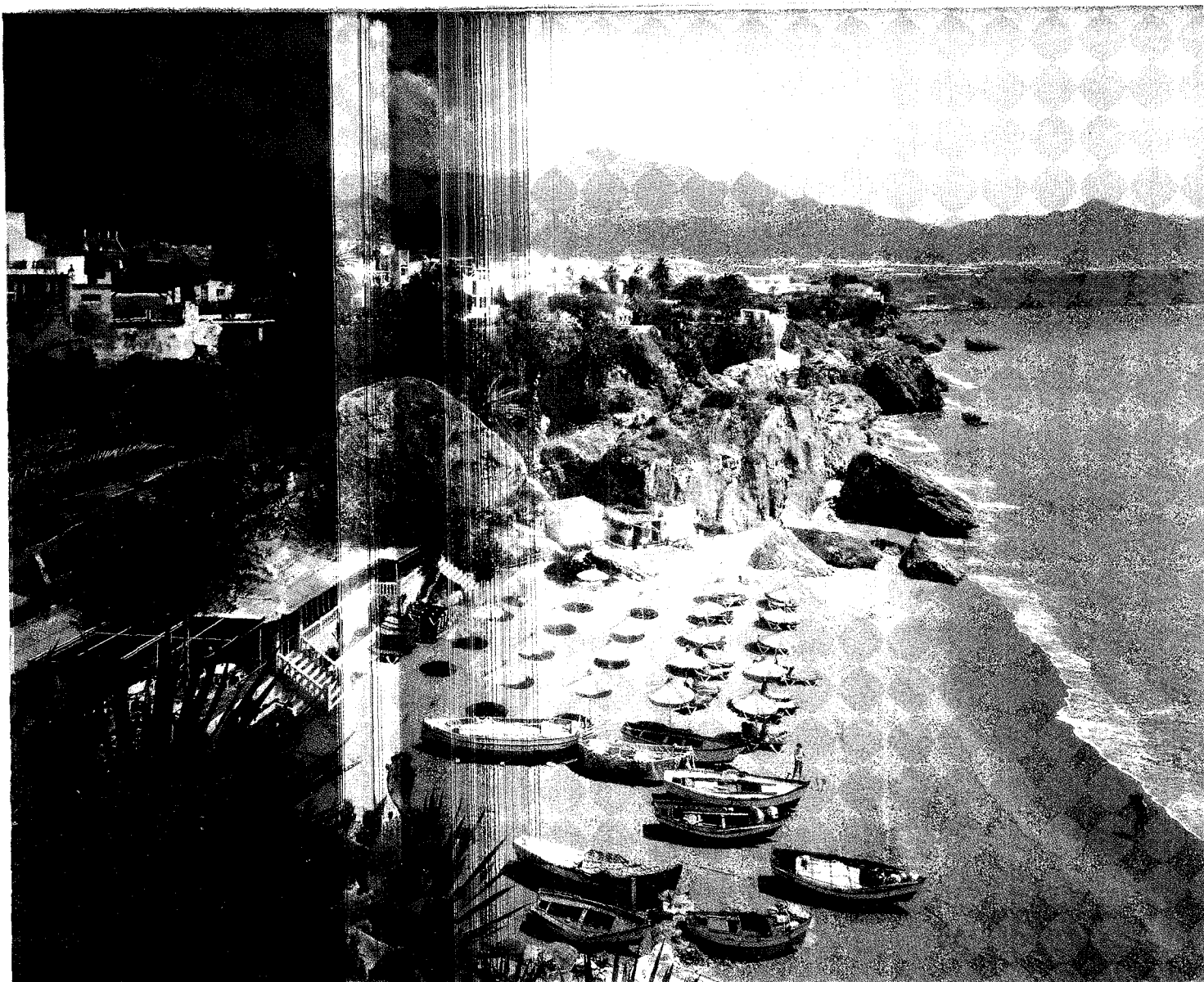
into a fantastically well-preserved twilight zone of European history.

Transylvania's territory composes a fecund third of present-day Romania. The 1989 revolution, culminating in the execution of the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, ended Ceaușescu's plans to "systematize" Romanian rural life (which involved bulldozing villages and dispersing peasants to concrete "agro-industrial complexes") and broke the command-economy fetters that bound the country, but Romania has been limp-

ing along ever since, a lame Balkan cousin of Hungary, the Central European dynamo to the northwest. Yet economic malaise has had a collateral benefit for Transylvania: the helter-skelter commercialization marring the historical ambience in much of the former Soviet bloc has not occurred here. Moated castles, citadels of spires and clock towers, and ramparted towns still transport travelers centuries back to an era when bespoke suits of mail were *de rigueur* for local counts, and Ottoman warriors threatened the very gates of Europe.

Transylvania presents visitors with none of the logistical hurdles encountered in the hardscrabble lands to its east. Trains go almost everywhere, and tickets cost roughly two dollars an hour for first-class travel (first-class Romanian-style, that is, with tatterdemalion but comfortably upholstered compartments and equally tatterdemalion but solicitous at-

Above, the hills near Brașov



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A meandering lane in Braşov, with Mount Tîmpa behind

tendants). There is no need to rent a car: taxis may be hired in the cities at a rate of only thirty cents a mile (if you are not a poker-faced bargainer, have a concierge or a Romanian acquaintance arrange this). Serviceable, clean hotels run a reasonable \$15 to \$40 a night. Latinate Romanian comes easily to the ears and tongues of French- or Italian-speakers, and English is no longer a rarity. All in all, ten to fourteen days should make a good trip, allowing you to see the places described below and perhaps a couple of others, such as Cluj, the vibrant fin-de-siècle Magyar capital of northern Transylvania, and Sibiu, the German bastion of the south. Transylvanians tend to be unpretentious and hospitable, and you may well be invited home to share a meal. Once you make local friends, you may decide to scrap your itinerary and surrender to the near-bucolic rhythm of life in this largely agricultural land.

The only caveat in order concerns money: divide your resources between traveler's checks (safe, but exchangeable *only in banks, at poor rates*) and cash dollars (in demand everywhere, but susceptible to theft—carry them hidden in a money belt). Off season a traveler wanting comfortable accommodations, first-class train tickets, and wholesome restaurant meals should spend about sixty dollars a day; summer sojourns are likely to cost 10 percent more. *Romania—The Rough*

Guide is the guidebook I recommend; it covers all budgets, has immensely useful town maps, and provides first-rate historical and cultural background information.

BELOW the beetling summit of Mount Tîmpa spreads the city of Braşov, a grid of red gabled roofs dominated by an odd slate-gray monolith. Founded by Saxons (ethnic Germans) in the thirteenth century and originally known as Kronstadt, the town, which was situated where three trade routes met, quickly grew into a major medieval commercial center, self-governing, fortified, and orderly. It is still the first significant Transylvanian stop for travelers approaching by rail or road from Bucharest. Stark fortifications stand in places around the old town, reminders of the centuries-long Ottoman threat and the Saxon determination to counter it. Yet Braşov's Baroque lanes and friendly rathskellers beguile visitors and make it a comfortable place to spend three or four days preparing for forays farther north in the region.

The gray monolith, which rises just off the central Sfatului Square, is the Biserica Neagră, or "Black Church," so named

after a fire charred its exterior in 1689. Puzzling from a distance, the church presents an enigma even when viewed up close. Over and around its entrance hang signs in four languages: CLOSE THE DOOR! THE CHURCH SHALL NOT BE VISITED ON SUNDAYS! IT IS FORBIDDEN TO WALK DOGS IN THE COURTYARD! Inside, Turkish carpets have been draped from every banister and railing, each with a DO NOT TOUCH! QUIET! sign shouting into the stony silence. The rest of the interior, with its white walls and oaken pews, gleams with Lutheran austerity. The Black Church, like Braşov, belongs to Saxon Land.

Once a backwater colony of the Roman Empire (whence Romania's name and language), Transylvania achieved limited historical prominence in the eleventh century, when the Hungarians brought it under their rule, settling it with their lower-caste nobility; with descendants of Attila the Hun, called Székely; and with Rhinelanders, who came to be known as Saxons. These three "nations" (as they called themselves) consolidated aristocratic privilege over a mainly Romanian peasantry, and their intrigues kept the region an autonomous buffer zone between a fearful Christian West and an expanding Muslim East. Even today travelers may hear Transylvania variously referred to as Erdély (Hungarian), Ardeal (Romanian, though Romanians may also use the less nationalistic "Transilvania"), and Siebenbürgen (German), depending on the ethnic background of their collocutors. This is no linguistic vestige of a defunct history: the region for

the most part belonged to Hungary until 1920, and Magyar irredentists raise the "Transylvanian question" still.

THE advent of the Turks in Europe isolated Transylvania and gave rise to Prince Vlad Tepeş, on whom Stoker loosely modeled his ghoulish Count

Dracula—one of the most enduring characters of literature and pop culture. In 1462 Tepeş ("The Impaler") routed invading Ottoman troops, sending them fleeing southward in terror through a forest of 20,000 Turkish and Bulgarian



Vlad Tepeş, "The Impaler"

prisoners he had impaled on stakes, rectum to sternum. Whatever Stoker made of Tepeș for his novel, the ruthless vanquisher of the Turks came to be regarded in his homeland as a champion of Christianity, and Romanians today do not associate him with the vampire superstitions once prevalent in Transylvania—except when angling for the tourist buck, mark, or franc.

Tepeș was born in Sighișoara, which I first visited in 1983. More than its Dracula connection, Sighișoara's renown as a trove of medieval architecture drew me there: its elevated old town (known as the Cetate, or "Citadel") is ranked as one of Eastern Europe's most stunning sights. But once there, I lost my appetite for sightseeing: Sighișoara then was a bare-bulb freezer of despair and creeping inanition. Romanians were suffering under Ceaușescu's debt-reduction austerity plan, shivering to death in almost unheated apartments, wasting away on food rations that barely sustained life. The "Genius of the Carpathians" and his ruinous misrule were desic-

cating the beauty of Tepeș's birthplace.

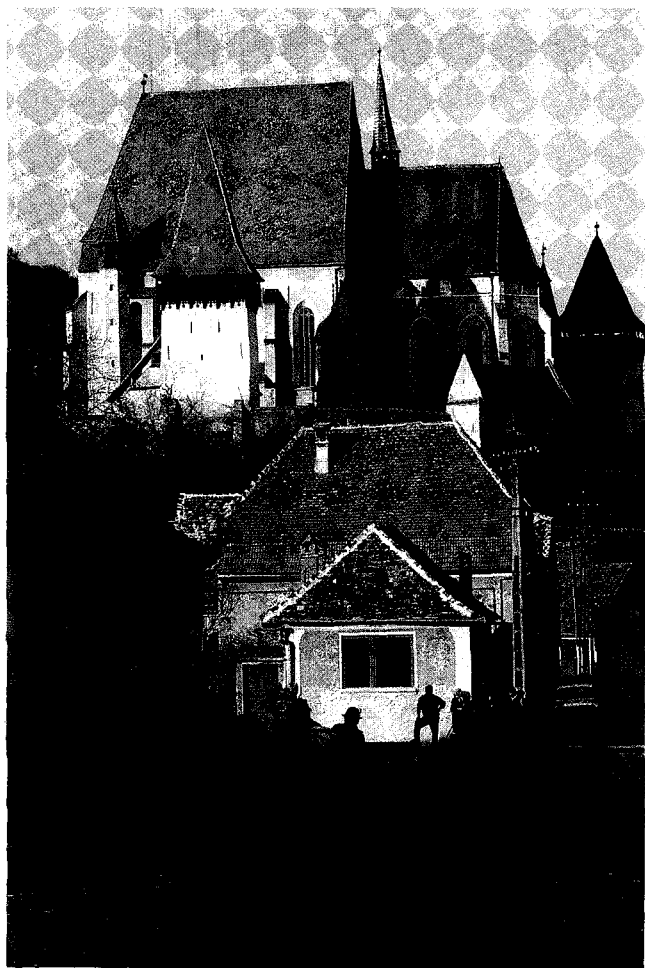
The revolution of 1989 liberated Sighișoara, and it is now quietly flourishing. Posters advertising MISS TRANSYLVANIA CONTEST 1996 festooned the main drag during my recent stay, and upscale pizzerias have replaced the fetid *autoservire* cafeterias of the socialist era. Visitors will enjoy losing their way in the perfectly preserved Cetate. The thirteenth-century clock tower, with Roman figurines that have emerged midnight after midnight for 700 years to mark the changing day, and the crows roistering to roost at dusk under the fortress walls evoke a sense of the Gothic and medieval that anyone, Dracula buff or not, may appreciate.

Other changes have come too, some of which appear startlingly final. This past November, I climbed the 175 wooden stairs toward the fourteenth-century Saxon Bergkirche ("Church on the Hill") towering above the Cetate. It was closed for restoration; in a cemetery under some cedars nearby, a monocled young Saxon was dipping a slender brush in black paint

and touching up the lettering on a tombstone. He greeted me in German, but for my sake we switched to rudimentary Romanian.

"Since 1989 most of us Saxons have left, either to Germany or . . ." He looked down at the tombstone.

In fact the exodus to Germany pre-dated the revolution. Ceaușescu himself abetted it in order to tilt the balance of Transylvania's historically Magyar-Saxon urban population in favor of Romanians. Yet if the German spoken across Transylvania since the thirteenth century has almost vanished, the Saxon legacy in stone remains. Fortified cathedrals dot the landscape, the best example of which is Biertan (in German, Birtäl), classified as a World



The fortified cathedral of Biertan, near Sighișoara

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Heritage Site by the United Nations. (The site is sixteen miles southwest of Sighișoara. You can hire a taxi for the trip there and ask the driver to wait for you; the bus runs once a day, if at all.) Rising yellow-beige above a gabled village where only the grunts of oxen under yoke break the smoky blue silence, Biertan's house of worship brooks none of the incense-induced transcendentalism of Byzantium that one finds in Transylvania's Orthodox cathedrals. Built in 1516,

a crusty late-middle-aged driver named Nicolae to take me there just the same.

"There *is* such a castle," Nicolae declared as we swept out of Bistrița through the late-morning fog. "You can even spend the night there, if you want."

As we ascended, we passed horse-drawn carriages and donkey carts rocking along the rutted road, their drivers wearing handlebar moustaches and floppy felt hats that one might have expected to see in Europe a century ago.

Prundu Bîrgăului and Murașenii Bîrgăului and the other villages looked deserted—only chimneys with trailing gray plumes betrayed the presence of life. Gargantuan firs arose beside the road. The slopes behind them, though steep, ended in summits and ridges less dramatic than what Stoker described (Harker passes a peak so awesome that the locals call it God's Seat). Yet the slanting light of autumn invested the firs and carriages and felt-hatted peasants with the woebegone charm of the fey, reminiscent of some childhood scene irretrievably remote, perhaps never even lived but only read of in the Brothers Grimm. Nicolae honored this melancholy with silence.

We reached Tihuta Pass. The "castle"

turned out to be the Hotel Castle Dracula, whose very name was an insult to what should be the chief attraction there: the alpine domain. We inhaled the piney air for a few minutes, and then began the descent, but soon Nicolae took a detour. "I have a surprise for you," he said. We turned left before Murașenii Bîrgăului and lumbered onto a dirt road.

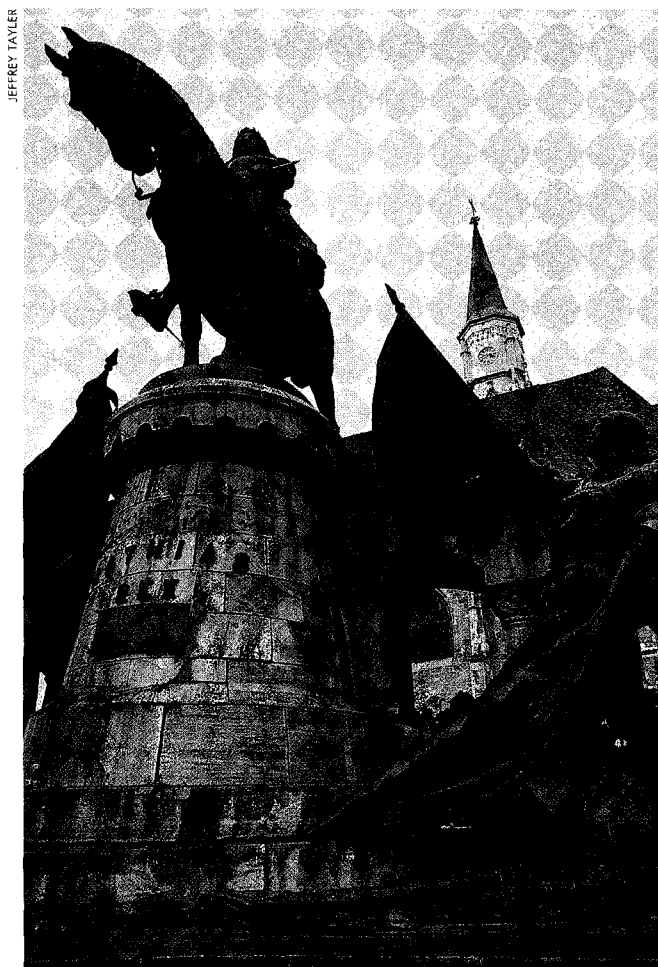
An hour later we were standing outside a slat fence in the village of Bistrița Bîrgăului. Nicolae whistled and knocked on the gate. "I have a cousin here," he told me. The gate opened and a stout

woman wearing a coarse wool scarf and knee-high rubber boots welcomed us in and led us to the kitchen, where a crackling wood stove exuded a soporific warmth.

"Try my *tuică*." She poured me a shot glass of the potent plum-distillate liqueur, and we two drank to our meeting (Nicolae, with the drive ahead, abstained). Then hot buns, piles of mashed potatoes, and disks of delicious flour-battered *chiflete* (ground beef) appeared. The *tuică* and the sudden warmth awakened a ravenous appetite in me, and I feasted away.

The cousin—whose name I never learned—and Nicolae began an animated discussion about his pension and a certain question of debt, attended with a declamatory flailing of arms and a punctuated stomping of feet; she interrupted her part in it only to replenish my *tuică*. Their Romanian, rippling with musical cadences and Latin cognates, sounded like demotic Italian; with the heady *tuică*, the language, and the drowsy stove, it seemed I was lost in a Sicily that had been banished in its entirety to some remote northern land.

PARTLY for reasons of convenience, travelers might want to save the best of the land for last. The moated, machicolated fifteenth-century castle of János Hunyadi (or, in Romanian, Iancu de Hunedoara), in Hunedoara, about a hundred miles west of Sighișoara and just off a rail line leading back to Bucharest, epitomizes the Hungarian and Romanian aspects of Transylvania's identity and may well provide the climax of a visit to the region. For the somber half of the year the castle looks like a black-and-white still from a Bela Lugosi movie, rising almost soot-black against a gray sky. As for Hunyadi, he was a warrior prince who may have been of mixed Magyar-Romanian parentage. What is certain is that in 1442 he defeated a major Turkish incursion thirty miles east of town. His castle reifies in stone and iron the spirit of defiance that kept Transylvania free during the Middle Ages. Gothic novels notwithstanding, it is just this conflation of architecture, history, and spirit that makes the "land beyond the forest" a prime medieval preserve worthy of the most discerning traveler's attention today. ☼



A statue of King Matthias, János Hunyadi's son

when the Turks were massing to the south, the church has an air of impregnable temporal fortitude. Yet its Saxon parishioners have fled, broken on Ceaușescu's lurid socialist wheel.

STOKER'S ingenuous protagonist, Jonathan Harker, begins the final leg of his journey to Dracula's Borgo Pass castle from the town of Bistrița, in northern Transylvania. There never was such a castle (I knew this), but once I was in Bistrița, the famed beauty of the pass (actually called Tihuta) prompted me to hire

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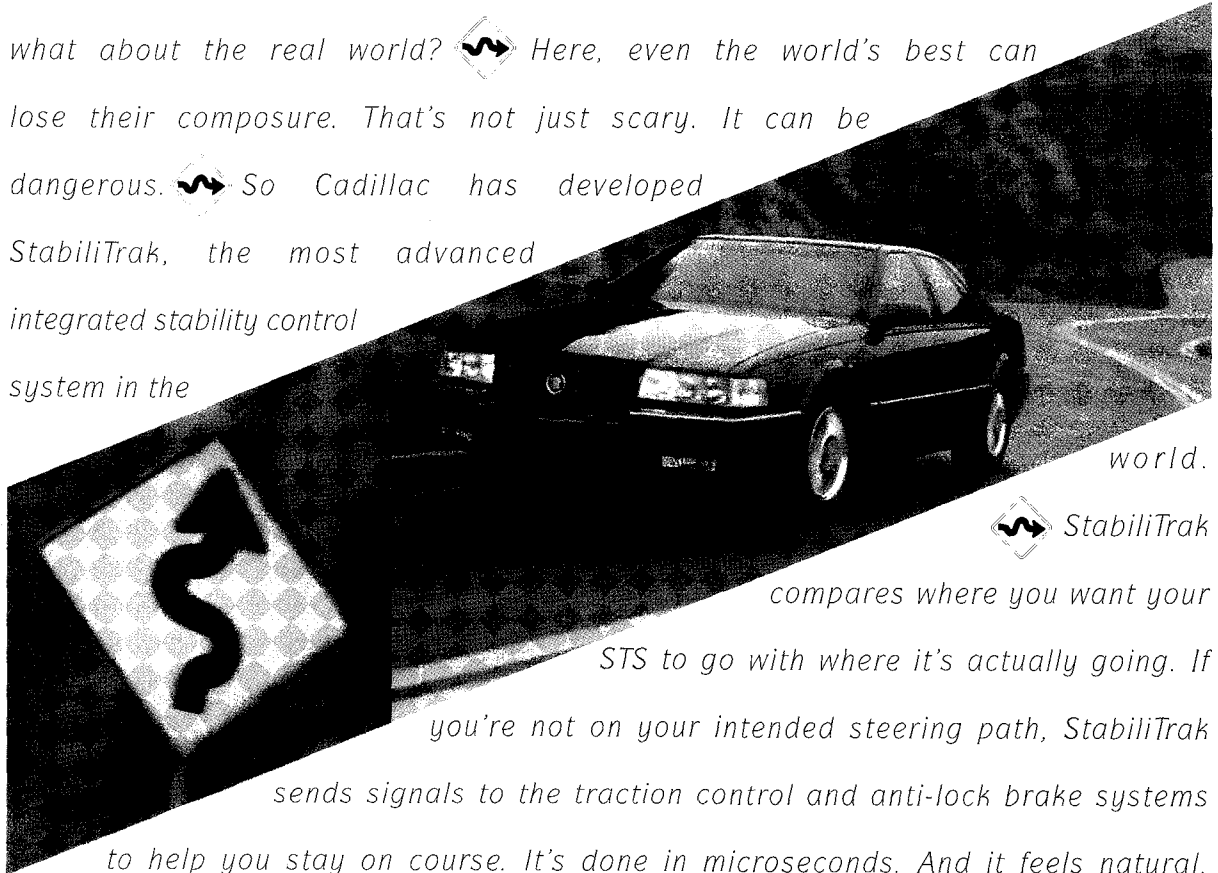
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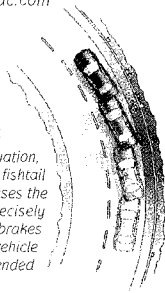
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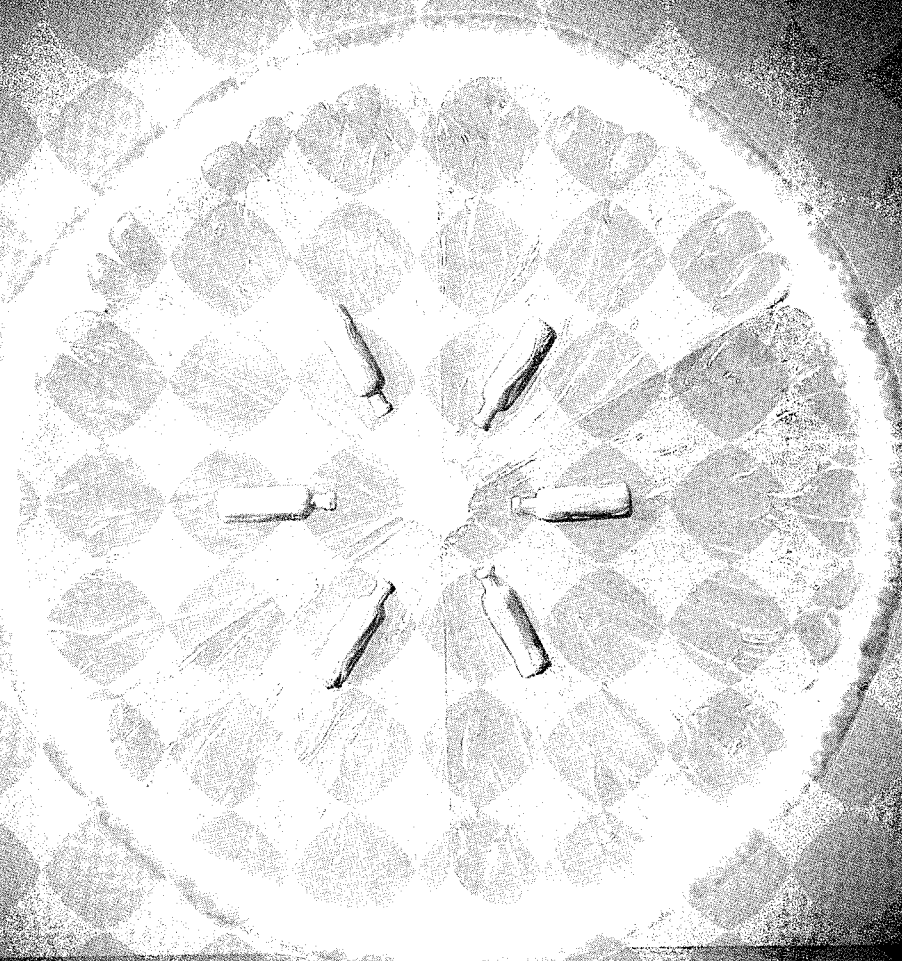
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THE **AIDS**

EXCEPTION:

PRIVACY VS. PUBLIC HEALTH

by CHANDLER BURR

EPIDEMIOLOGY, which encompasses both the systematic study of infectious disease and the implementation of the means to contain it, is something of a medical oddity. As dependent

on statisticians and politicians as it is on medical-care providers, and often used at times of desperation, by practitioners who have been accorded police and in certain cases military powers, epidemiology has sometimes had to strike a balance between the harshness that may be required to control infectious diseases and the civil liberties of people whose rights may be subject to abridgment.

Since the turn of the century, with the introduction in this country of bacteriological testing and the establishment of boards of health, standard public-health measures have been deployed against infectious diseases. These measures, leaving aside the extreme step of holding people in quarantine, have typically included at least some of the following: *routine test-*

*It's time to stop
granting "civil rights" to HIV—
and to confront AIDS with
more of the traditional tools of
public health*

ing for infection, often undertaken without explicit patient consent; reporting to local health authorities of the names of those who test positive for infection; contact tracing, or the identification of any people who may have been exposed to

infection; and notification of these possibly infected people that they may have been exposed. Some combination of these four practices has been commonly applied against outbreaks of infectious diseases, including typhoid, diphtheria, and tuberculosis, and against upsurges in sexually transmitted diseases. It would be surprising if, out of all the viruses and bacteria that can do us significant harm, one was exempted from the scope of these measures. It would be even more surprising if the one chosen pathogen was responsible for an epidemic that today constitutes the leading cause of death among all Americans aged twenty-five to forty-four.

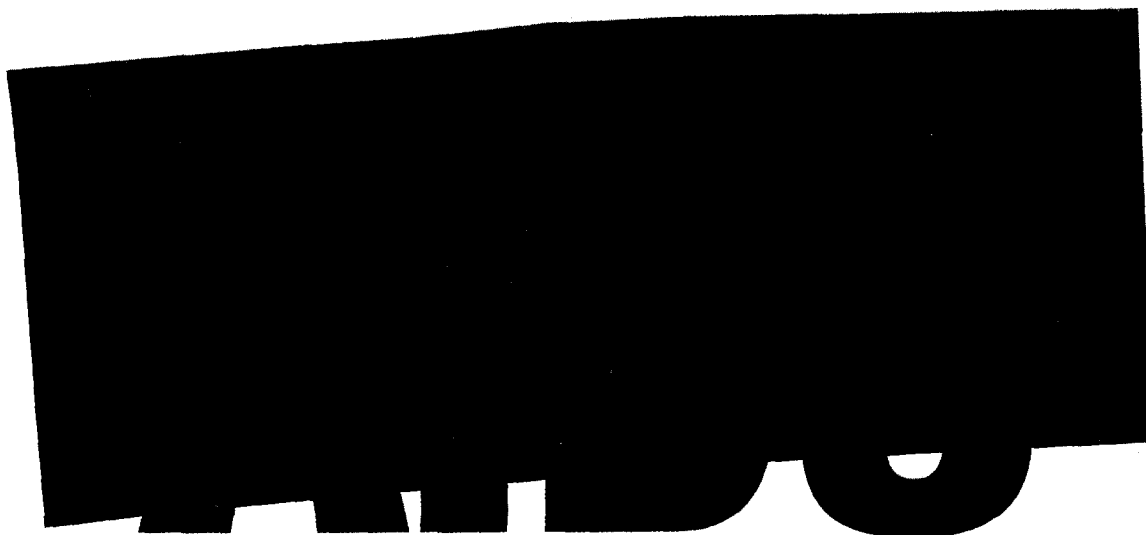
This very thing has, of course, happened, largely in order to accommodate civil-rights concerns. The practice of tradi-

tional public health has been to a great degree suspended for acquired immune deficiency syndrome and for human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes it. Although various traditional public-health steps are being taken against AIDS and HIV, in differing combinations from state to state, the result is a chaotic patchwork—one that is inadequate, a growing number of critics say, to the task of containing and eradicating AIDS.

“We have convinced ourselves,” Ralph Frerichs, a prominent epidemiologist at the University of California at Los Angeles, wrote in a recent issue of the journal *Epidemiology*, “that the fight for survival can be waged in a way that is socially acceptable but not always biologically credible.” Many public-health officials, he contended, “have remained steadfast in their commitment to programs and approaches

lesser extent, of intravenous-drug users). Public-health authorities, faced with a fatal, communicable disease whose method of transmission they did not understand, desperately needed the cooperation of the infected—as they would in any epidemic. In the case of AIDS, however, the infected eventually became disinclined to cooperate. “In the first months and years of the epidemic,” the journalist Elinor Burkett, the author of *The Gravest Show on Earth* (1995), recalled not long ago, “people with AIDS died in the hallways of hospitals, where nurses wouldn’t touch them. They were kicked out of their apartments. Insurance companies canceled their policies. Their bosses fired them. They had no idea how to get Social Security disability payments or Medicaid.”

The discovery of HIV, and the development of a test that could detect it, brought matters to a head. In the aftermath of



that have hidden the identity of HIV carriers but have failed to halt viral transmission”—a commitment that is in the end bound to prove self-defeating, “making winners of the virus but losers of people.”

THE PRICE OF COOPERATION

WHAT is known in the field of public health as AIDS exceptionalism has been maintained in legally and programmatically direct ways and also in complex and subtle ways. Its origins are not difficult to ascertain.

When AIDS first surfaced, in the early 1980s, it was indisputably a disease of urban male homosexuals (and, to a far

anti-gay persecution and even violence, the price exacted by a terrified gay community for cooperation in even a rudimentary public-health effort was ironclad anonymity. In 1985, shortly before the federal government was to announce the licensing of the first test for detecting HIV, the National Gay Task Force and the gay civil-rights group Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund filed a petition in federal court to delay this action, pending a legal guarantee that the test would not lead to widespread screening aimed at gay men. They then put pressure on the Food and Drug Administration, which along with the federal Centers for Disease Control (now the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and henceforward referred to as the CDC) had been made aware of eager queries from school districts hoping to use the HIV test to

identify and fire gay teachers. The FDA quickly acceded to the demand that the HIV test be used not to screen and identify *people* for HIV infection in systematic campaigns but only to screen the blood in blood banks.

Out of the threat that the HIV test posed to privacy grew a rigid resistance to almost all HIV testing without consent—and a public-health approach to combating AIDS characterized by considerable delicacy. The FDA's agreement to restrict how the HIV test could be used resolved, temporarily, a political problem. Left unanswered, as Randy Shilts, in his book *And the Band Played On* (1987), observed, was "the broader public health question of how you can control a disease if you decline to find out who is infected." Shilts went on, "In this poisoned atmosphere, the nuances of long-term consequences for control of the infection fell low on the list of gay concerns."

The result, ultimately, was the effective suspension of traditional public-health procedures for AIDS, which is to say, there would be no routine testing for HIV; the reporting of the names of the HIV-infected would be required only in some places, and would miss the epidemic's hotspots; and contact tracing and notification would as a result be greatly handicapped, and in many places pursued in desultory fashion if at all, often in the face of opposition. All efforts were to be voluntary—dependent on educational outreach and persuasion rather than on systematic procedures. "U.S. officials had no alternative but to negotiate the course of AIDS policy with representatives of a well-organized gay community and their allies in the medical and political establishments," Ronald Bayer, a professor at the Columbia University School of Public Health, wrote in a critical retrospective some years ago. "In this process, many of the traditional practices of public health that might have been brought to bear were dismissed as inappropriate."

A NUMBER of opportunities present themselves for the routine testing of people for various diseases by public institutions, routine testing being defined as testing that can be performed without a person's explicit consent. Pregnant mothers are routinely tested for tuberculosis, hepatitis B, and syphilis; testing for chlamydia and group-B streptococcus is also common under certain circumstances. Newborn babies are routinely tested, without the mothers' permission, for phenylketonuria and hypothyroidism. Patients admitted to hospitals may undergo a variety of blood tests, depending on

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YES.**

their symptoms, the tests being performed as a matter of course, without necessarily informing the patient or asking explicit permission. Although a patient can at any time refuse to undergo a routine test, he or she does not have to be specially notified that the test is being done or given a specific opportunity to refuse.

HIV testing, in contrast, is almost always voluntary—which means it is done either at an anonymous-testing site or with a person's explicit permission (and which usually means also that the person being tested must sign a release). At the federal level HIV testing is required only of immigrants entering the country, foreign-service and military personnel, and federal-prison inmates. At the state level routine testing is prohibited everywhere except under narrowly

defined circumstances. Marcia Angell, the executive editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and a proponent of routine testing in some form, says, "Having to ask specifically has a huge effect, and it is a clear difference between AIDS and many other diseases."

Making even certain subpopulations the target of routine testing would turn up large numbers of infected people who currently escape detection. In a 1992 *New England Journal of Medicine* article Robert Janssen and his colleagues at the Division of HIV/AIDS at the National Center for Infectious Diseases recommended voluntary targeted testing for HIV in certain hospitals, a policy well short of routine testing and yet one that has been implemented virtually nowhere. They wrote,

We estimate that about 225,000 HIV-positive persons were hospitalized in 1990, of whom only one third were admitted for symptomatic HIV infection or AIDS. Routine, voluntary HIV testing of patients 15 to 54 years old in hospitals with 1 or more patients with newly diagnosed AIDS per 1,000 discharges per year could potentially have identified as many as 110,000 patients with HIV infection that was previously unrecognized.

Testing that is merely voluntary may also miss populations that disproportionately need to be reached. The people least likely to have the virus are the most likely to say yes to a test, and the people most likely to have it are the most likely to say no. In one study infection rates were 5.3 times as high among people who refused HIV testing as among people who consented to it.

One might ask, How could a study give the infection rate of those who refused the HIV test? The answer demonstrates the methods that researchers—in this case, at the New Mex-

ico Health and Environment Department—must employ in order to obtain data without violating personal rights as protected by law. Voluntary, anonymous HIV tests were offered over a three-month period to all patients visiting a sexually-transmitted-disease clinic. Eighty-two percent of the patients consented to being tested for HIV. To determine the rate of HIV infection among those who did not consent to testing, researchers located serum that had been taken from these patients for syphilis testing, removed all identifying information, and then tested the serum for HIV.

Exceptionalists argue that routine testing will “drive AIDS underground”—make people avoid the health-care system altogether. There is no empirical proof that this will or won’t occur to a greater extent than it already does, under a voluntary regime. Ultimately one must ask whether people who would go underground because of perceived self-interest should dictate policy—and also whether such people would cooperate in disease-prevention efforts under any circumstances.

WHY does testing matter? The most basic epidemiology holds that early knowledge of where a virus is moving—into which populations—is essential to slowing its spread. Even if a disease cannot be cured, knowing who the infected people are may help prevent the transmission of the disease to other people. Geneviève Clavreul, a California-based consultant to the International Cancer and AIDS Research Foundation, says that because of testing and reporting restrictions the California Department of Public Health is in essence “flying blind” in its epidemiological tracking. By law or regulation, cases of certain sexually transmitted diseases and of many other infectious diseases must be reported to state departments of health, and the names of the infected are in most cases provided and are always held in confidence. HIV is the exception. Although the disease called AIDS must be reported by name in all fifty states, infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, need not be: only twenty-six states mandate the (confidential) reporting by name of positive test results for HIV, and these states tend to be ones with modest caseloads. Twelve states—including California and New York, by far the two worst-afflicted states—have no broad reporting requirements for HIV.

Requiring the reporting of AIDS but not HIV seems equivalent to requiring, say, that full-blown cases of hepatitis B be reported but not any newly detected infections with the hepatitis virus. Actually, it is worse. The incu-

bation period for hepatitis B is usually two or three months, whereas the period between infection with HIV and a diagnosis of AIDS is often longer than ten years. This means that during all this time HIV-positive people can be both infectious and outside the public-health system. The disease is further privatized by the HIV home-testing kits now on the market, which to yet one more degree put testing and reporting into the hands of individuals.

As noted, state public-health practices mandate that certain sexually transmitted diseases be reported; in part to avoid reporting HIV some states have decided not to classify HIV as a sexually transmitted disease—even though the primary mode of HIV infection is, of course, sexual. As of 1995 only twelve states had classified AIDS and HIV infection as sexually transmitted diseases. Only sixteen states had even classified them as communicable diseases. Treating AIDS and HIV infection as exceptions, twenty-three states, including New York and California, had classified them as a separate category of disease. A report prepared for the CDC by Georgetown University and Johns Hopkins University’s Program on Law and Public Health observes of this situation: “Disease-specific legislation may thwart public health goals by generating separate policies, programs, and procedures for diseases that may share common behavioral risk factors and require a unified approach for treatment and prevention.”

BEYOND issues of testing and reporting lies the issue of partner notification. “Partner notification” is the term used by the CDC to describe a spectrum of outreach efforts. One such effort is contact tracing, also called “provider referral,” in which doctors or public-health officials locate

partners of infected people (if the infected people are willing or able to provide names) and notify them of possible infection; the name of the known infected person is always kept confidential. At a further remove on the spectrum is “patient referral,” in which infected people locate and notify partners on their own. Only thirty-three states have laws that explicitly allow doctors or public-health officials to notify the sex or needle-sharing partners of those with AIDS or infected with HIV. Only four states (Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Oregon) have statutes requiring notification.

All states technically have something that they can point to as a “partner-notification program,” having such a program being a prerequisite for obtaining certain federal funds.

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HELPED.**

But the effectiveness of partner-notification programs varies widely, for reasons relating as much to how the programs are implemented as to what specific steps they call for: the real difference is between states, such as Colorado and North Carolina, that actively strive to find and notify partners primarily through provider referral, and states, such as New York and California, that tend to rely on patient referral, deferring the responsibility of notification to the infected.

As one would expect, there seems to be a marked contrast between the effectiveness of well-established partner-notification programs in which provider-referral services are made available, and that of programs in which infected people themselves do the notifying if they are so inclined. One study found that active partner-notification programs offering provider-referral services get 30 to 90 percent (depending on

study conducted at a Los Angeles AIDS clinic the average T-cell count in HIV-positive women who entered the clinic through active provider-referral partner notification was found to be 411; the average for all other women entering the clinic was 157. ("T-cell count" refers to the number of T-helper cells, a kind of white-blood cell that is essential to the proper functioning of the cellular immune system; HIV attacks and kills these cells. The T-cell count is closer to 1,000 in a healthy person, though the healthy range is subject to considerable variability. A T-cell count under 200 is one of the criteria for a diagnosis of AIDS.)

Does an absence of routine testing, reporting, and notification mean that a lot of undiscovered AIDS and HIV cases are festering in the larger society? Yes. According to the CDC, the number of Americans infected with HIV is as high as



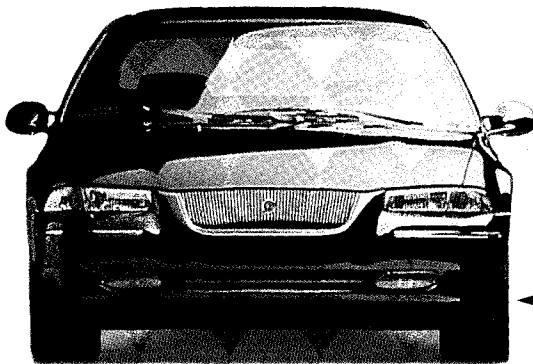
the city or state) of people who have tested positive to cooperate in contacting those they may have infected. Ninety percent or more of those contacted agree to be tested. However, programs in which notification is left up to the infected achieve a cooperation rate of less than 10 percent. It should be noted also that by virtue of the fact that trained public-health personnel in most instances make the notifications in provider-referral cases, testing information and counseling are made readily available to possibly infected contacts. Programs that notify primarily through provider referral find a larger proportion of other infected people, and find them earlier. The sooner a person knows of his or her infection and begins treatment, and the higher that person's T-cell count when treatment begins, the better the prognosis. In a recent

900,000; of these, the CDC estimates, perhaps half are unaware of their infection. At least a quarter of all people in whom AIDS was diagnosed from 1990 to 1995 in Los Angeles County first became aware of their infection when they came to hospitals or clinics with advanced symptoms, having never previously been tested for HIV. In all likelihood such people had been HIV-positive for years. Most cancer, diabetes, or high-blood-pressure patients have been tested for these medical problems, know their status, and have begun treatment well before admission to a hospital with advanced symptoms. The situation with AIDS means, as one Los Angeles AIDS clinic director observed during a recent interview, that "something is really wrong." Because the lifetime cost of treating HIV is so high (estimated in 1993 to be \$119,000 per

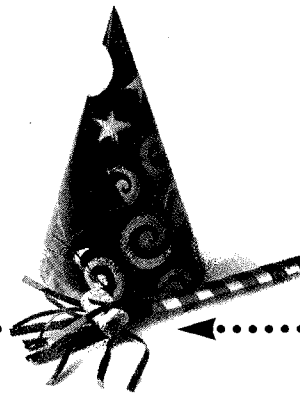
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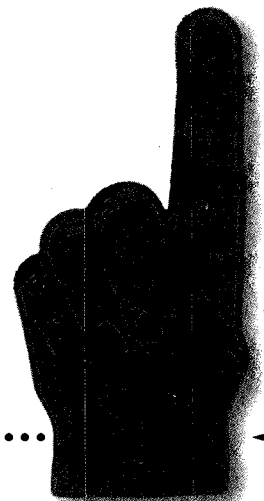
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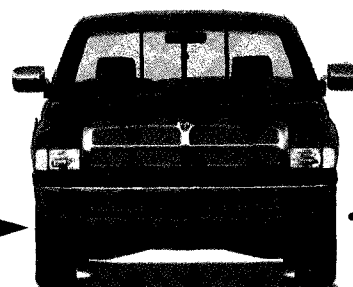
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patient), the CDC has concluded that AIDS and HIV notification programs pay for themselves if only one in eighty notifications prevents a new HIV infection by indicating to the notified person that a change in behavior is warranted.

AIDS has been so thoroughly exempted from traditional public-health approaches that civil libertarians have defeated in court attempts by health authorities to notify the spouses of people who have died of AIDS that their husbands or wives were HIV-infected. During the first years of the disease, legislation urged by civil libertarians prohibited physicians and public-health officials from notifying even the spouses of living people who had tested positive for HIV, some of whom continued to have unprotected sex with their partners. In some states laws have been enacted making partner notification by a physician at best discretionary under tightly defined circumstances.

National legislation on spousal notification, passed last year, mandates that states make a "good-faith effort" to notify at-risk spouses. However, in effect the law applies only to states that already require the names of infected people to be reported. And in any event, the matter of partner notification when the partners are (or were) married addresses, of course, only a small part of the AIDS problem.

WRONGHEADED RATIONALES

HOW has AIDS exceptionalism been justified? In the mid-1980s four arguments were regularly heard for exempting AIDS from standard public-health practices. 1) There had never before been a disease that seemed to constitute a de facto marker for homosexuality, with all the social stigma that this label carries. 2) The confidentiality of testing would inevitably be violated, precisely because AIDS is more stigmatized than any other disease. 3) Given the large number of sex partners of many of those who have become HIV-infected, contact tracing would be ineffectual. 4) Because there is no cure for AIDS, and no treatment to render the infected uninfected, it was pointless to report HIV infection as is done for other infections.

However legitimate the civil-liberties issues it sought to address may have been more than a decade ago, the exceptionalist orthodoxy is now fundamentally wrongheaded as a matter of good public health and medicine.

The argument that AIDS is a unique marker for homosexuality is incorrect, and always was so. Rectal gonorrhea in men has been almost exclusively a disease of the gay population, and is a more reliable marker for homosexuality, if anyone were looking for such a marker, than AIDS ever was. And yet cases of rectal gonorrhea have appeared for decades, by name and date, in confidential case reports sent to state public-health departments.

The argument that confidentiality will inevitably be violated has met a serious counter-argument in the form of real-

ity: the experience of Minnesota and Colorado, which have since 1985 mandated the confidential reporting by name of both HIV and AIDS cases. As of the end of last year, for example, Colorado health authorities had received the names of 5,723 people with AIDS and of 5,137 additional people infected with HIV. There have been no breaches of confidentiality. As noted, twenty-six states now require confidential reporting of all HIV cases by name. A single intentional breach of confidentiality in the CDC's AIDS surveillance system is known to have occurred (in Florida).

As for discrimination, the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed in 1990, a decade after the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, prohibits discrimination based on HIV status. In addition, the federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, state discrimination laws, and state constitutions have all been interpreted by courts as protecting people from exactly the sort of discrimination that AIDS exceptionalists claim is inevitable. And courts have in most cases ruled that being infected with HIV constitutes a disability according to the legal definition of the term, even when the infected person is asymptomatic. "We've done more or less everything that can be done on the legislative front to protect people from discrimination on the basis of HIV status," says Chai Feldblum, an associate professor at Georgetown University Law School and one of the principal architects of the ADA. "The laws are there."

The argument that contact tracing will prove to be ineffectual because many of those infected with HIV have had a large number of sex partners ignores the fact that many of those infected with syphilis and gonorrhea, other diseases for which gay men are at increased risk, have also had a large number of sex partners, and yet contact tracing has been standard procedure for these diseases for decades.

The argument that name reporting is pointless because there is no treatment has always been open to question on a number of grounds. Yes, the statement may have a certain logic from the perspective of a given infected individual concerned only about his or her fate. But if infected people can be identified, education and counseling may at the very least prompt changes in their behavior which will diminish the risk that they go on to infect others; contact tracing, in turn, extends the possibility of risk-diminishing behavioral change even more widely. Knowing who is infected is essential in helping to prevent new infections, even if the infected person himself cannot be helped.

In any event, evidence shows that new medical treatments are making HIV less infectious than ever. The latest treatments are astonishingly promising for at least some of the infected population.

Some 15 to 30 percent of HIV-infected pregnant women pass the virus on to their infants. Early treatment with zidovudine, or AZT, for the woman during pregnancy and for the infant after birth, can cut the proportion to eight percent. A new class of drugs called protease inhibitors is likely to cut the rate

even further, if the drugs are used early. The key word is “early”—which means testing pregnant mothers, not just newborn babies. The American Medical Association now recommends that HIV testing be made mandatory for pregnant women. Gay and AIDS activists have denounced this recommendation.

Protease inhibitors, which in some cases have reduced the level of HIV in the bloodstreams of the infected to undetectable levels, have revolutionized care for many patients. “I think we already have the capability to make HIV infection a chronic, manageable disease like diabetes in patients who can afford the therapy and who can take it with one-hundred-percent compliance,” says Joel Gallant, the director of the Moore HIV Clinic at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Protease inhibitors have provoked debate as to their long-term effectiveness, their ability to withstand viral resistance, and their price (the protease inhibitor Invirase costs approximately \$7,000 for a year’s supply), and also, as Gallant has noted, because of the fastidiousness required for effective administration. But the fact remains that the exceptionalist argument that no treatment is possible is losing whatever force it had.

The benefits of knowing who is infected are still more compelling today than they were in 1992, when the CDC AIDS laboratory chief Donald Francis, writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in favor of more-aggressive testing and the channeling of the infected into prevention and counseling programs, brought up “the ability to deliver important new products produced by scientific research.” He wrote,

Should the day come when a vaccine or therapeutic drug becomes available, a system for immediate delivery to those in greatest need would be required. There is no system by which to do that now. But if all infected persons were being followed up in an early intervention program, delivery would be straightforward. In my opinion, early intervention should be given the highest national priority.

The fact that AIDS is not easily transmissible (it is a hundred times less infectious than hepatitis B, and incomparably less contagious than an airborne disease like tuberculosis) provides further impetus to discover who is and is not HIV-infected. The knowledge that a given person is infected, if it means that the person takes any preventive measures at all, is much more valuable in the case of AIDS than it is for other diseases.

REMEDY-RESISTANT POLITICS?

DESPITE such developments, attempts to alter the public-health approach to AIDS, though on occasion successful, have met with fierce opposition. A case in point occurred in the spring of 1995, when Gary Ackerman, a liberal Democratic congressman from New York, introduced a bill with 220 co-sponsors to “unblind” a national infant-testing program for HIV run by the CDC as a way of

monitoring HIV-infection rates in women. Since 1988 the CDC had been “blind-testing” infants for HIV in forty-five states—using blood samples, collected at birth, from which all identifying tags had been removed. Testing for HIV in this way meant that the CDC knew how many infants carried their mother’s HIV antibodies but not who they or their infected mothers were. Mothers, therefore, were being sent home without being informed that they and in some cases their children were infected with a fatal virus. The CDC had no choice in the matter, being legally prevented from testing without informed consent. Under the Ackerman bill mechanisms were to be instituted so that if an infant tested positive, those doing the testing would have a way of knowing who that infant was, and its mother could be informed.

The response to this proposed legislation was immediate. Virtually every gay and AIDS group, including Gay Men’s Health Crisis, the AIDS Action Council, and the National Association of People With AIDS, along with the ACLU and prominent public-health experts at leading universities, opposed the bill, largely on the grounds that unblinding the tests would do nothing to help prevent HIV transmission from mothers to their infants and would violate the privacy inherent in such an anonymous surveillance study, potentially scaring pregnant women away from seeking proper prenatal care. The intensity of feeling with which such measures have been opposed should not be underestimated. Ackerman’s bill was modeled on a bill introduced in the New York State Assembly by the Democratic legislator Nettie Mayersohn to unblind the anonymous infant-testing program in New York. Mayersohn, a pro-choice, feminist old-line liberal who in 1989 had been named Legislator of the Year by the New York State chapter of the National Organization for Women, was labeled a “fascist” by individuals associated with the AIDS lobby. (Last June, three years after Mayersohn introduced her original legislation, the New York legislature passed a bill allowing the state to institute mandatory HIV testing of newborns and to notify parents of the test results. Newborn testing began last February.)

In the matter of the Ackerman legislation, the head of the CDC informed Ackerman that if the bill were not withdrawn, the CDC would suspend the infant-testing program altogether. Ackerman gave no credence to this threat by a public-health agency, because the infant-testing program was demonstrably useful in tracking the prevalence and trajectory of heterosexual AIDS. But the CDC program was indeed suspended. Public-health authorities thus lost even this imperfect means of monitoring one aspect of the epidemic.

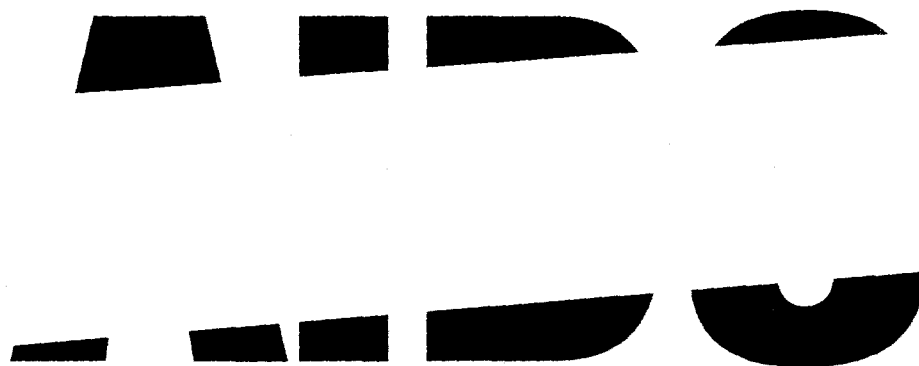
In response to the CDC’s suspension of testing, Ackerman joined forces with Tom Coburn, a Republican congressman and a Christian conservative from Oklahoma, to draft new legislation that has become known as the “Baby AIDS Compromise.” The legislation was enacted last May as part of a larger bill, the Ryan White CARE Reauthorization Act. The compro-

mise requires state health-care workers to offer counseling and voluntary HIV testing to pregnant women who have not previously been tested for HIV. States that by March of 2000 do not meet certain goals with respect to the voluntary HIV testing of pregnant women or to HIV incidence among newborns will have to implement a mandatory infant-testing program or lose some federal AIDS funding.

THE ultimate question for AIDS exceptionalism is this: Do the disease-containment and disease-prevention measures of traditional public health—the measures from whose full force AIDS has been significantly shielded—work? The answer given to this question by AIDS exceptionalists as well as traditionalists seems to be yes. Joel Gallant, for example, opposes routine involuntary testing for HIV

ditional public health is absolutely effective at controlling infectious disease. It should have been applied to AIDS from the start, and it wasn't. Long before there was AIDS, there were other sexually transmitted diseases, and you had partner notification and testing and reporting. This was routine public health at its finest, and this is the way STDs were controlled."

In the months ahead a national debate may well be joined over rescinding the exceptional public-health status of AIDS, owing in part to a bill introduced by Tom Coburn, the Oklahoma congressman. Coburn's bill, the HIV Prevention Act of 1997, would establish confidential HIV reporting nationwide. It would require states to inform anyone who has been exposed to HIV. It would require that all people accused of sexual offenses be tested for HIV. And it would allow health-care providers to test a patient for HIV before performing a risky



and aggressive partner notification, but not on medical grounds; rather, he fears the potential for employment and insurance discrimination, domestic abuse, and breaches of confidentiality. He maintains that he would otherwise favor traditional public-health procedures for the fight against AIDS, particularly routine testing.

Lee Reichman, the executive director of the National Tuberculosis Center and a physician on the staff of the New Jersey Medical School who cares for AIDS patients, cautions that given the course that the evolution and politics of the disease have taken, traditional public-health measures by themselves may no longer be feasible, in part because of the possibility that they will drive the infected underground. As noted, this is an exceptionalist article of faith. But Reichman goes on: "Tra-

invasive medical procedure. The Coburn bill contains a number of other provisions and also two nonbinding "sense of the Congress" resolutions, one urging states to criminalize the intentional transmission of HIV, the other affirming the principle that strict confidentiality must be observed in carrying out the bill's provisions. (A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate.) "The fact is that epidemiology works," Coburn says, "and public-health policies work to control disease, and they work by identifying vectors of infectious disease, and you notify people at risk. If you don't do that, you can't control the disease. And that's what we've not done with HIV."

The AIDS Action Council—a group "dedicated solely to shaping fair and effective AIDS policy," in the words of its literature—has denounced the Coburn bill as "an attempt to

federalize policies that do nothing but stigmatize and punish people living with HIV/AIDS.” The act, in the view of the council, “replaces education and personal responsibility with ‘Big Brother’ intrusion and control.” In previous statements the council has characterized measures like the ones now proposed as “failed policies that do nothing to prevent any more Americans from becoming infected with HIV.”

It is hard to see how traditionalist policies can be said to have “failed” with AIDS, since they have not been systematically tried. Be that as it may, some skepticism toward legislation like Coburn’s is warranted. Conservatives representing themselves as public-health advocates are certainly vulnerable to a charge of hypocrisy. Coburn’s bill does not address one of the exceptionalists’ central criticisms: that although traditional procedures will identify more infected people, conservatives are not prepared to offer any plan for helping those infected people (many of whom have no health insurance and little education, and many of whom are homeless) after they have been identified. The Coburn bill offers no new funds for the state public-health departments that would be obliged to carry out its testing and reporting provisions. A traditionalist approach to AIDS will cost money, and those who advocate such an approach should be making the case that more money is needed.

Exceptionalists also point out, correctly and bitterly, that the hatred directed against homosexuals, and the discrimination they experience at the hands of anti-gay conservatives, among others, are responsible in the first place for the very exceptionalist policies that conservatives like Coburn now so strongly oppose. Coburn’s own outlook gives one pause. It was Coburn who elicited condemnation and ridicule when he criticized the airing on network television last winter of *Schindler’s List*, complaining about the depiction of violence and frontal nudity.

As noted, epidemiology has sometimes had to weigh the issue of civil rights against the issue of effective disease control. The time has come to consider anew how these factors should tip the scales. We do not, of course, have an absolute guarantee that traditional epidemiology applied to AIDS and HIV would markedly bolster the success of public-health efforts. But such a guarantee is hardly required. Marcia Angell, of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, observes, “Nobody can document or prove that traditional methods of control would work better at containing AIDS, because nobody has done what would be necessary to get such proof—studying two populations, one in which traditional methods are applied and one in which they aren’t. The reason no one has done this is that it is impossible. It is impossible because it’s unethical and logically unworkable. So, as in many things in life, the default position is common sense. And I have no doubt, given the track record of these methods in controlling other diseases, that if, for example, we screened all expectant mothers, we could prevent AIDS in many cases. And if we traced partners,

we would prevent AIDS in many cases. And if we routinely tested in hospitals, we would prevent AIDS in many cases.”

Ralph Frerichs, of UCLA, framed the matter like this in the course of an interview: “Historically, public health has always transcended the legal system, much like the military. When you have an outside threat, you can suspend the normal rules of society. Traditionally, we epidemiologists have been granted full responsibility, but society has eroded that, and we now talk about respecting the rights of human individuals who have disease-causing viruses, bacteria, and so on, which makes it increasingly difficult to stop the spread of these diseases. This is society’s choice. But this is de facto granting rights to the viruses and to the bacteria. And when epidemics are presented this way, as a matter of rights, the public has a harder time distinguishing the infection from the infected. The virus is our enemy, not the person with the virus, but at the same time that person harbors the virus, and we need to take a series of steps to prevent that virus from moving to another person.

“In AIDS, as in all epidemics, there is a tradeoff between emphasizing detection of the virus and the civil-rights violations that detection engenders. Given that we have not pushed for aggressive testing, reporting, and partner notification, it appears that our so-

society is willing to accept a higher amount of HIV infection to avoid interfering with the rights of HIV-infected people.”

Earlier this year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that largely because of gains in life expectancy among the infected, annual deaths from AIDS had registered a significant decline for the first time since the onset of the epidemic. That they have done so is hardly grounds for complacency. It is evidence, however, that medical interventions make a palpable difference—and is all the more reason to start subjecting AIDS, from a public-health perspective, to more-systematic procedures.

In the end AIDS would be unlikely to prove resistant to good basic public-health policies. It may survive if it can circumvent good sense. ♣

**A
TRADITIONALIST
APPROACH
TO AIDS WILL
COST MONEY, AND
THOSE WHO
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The Fragging

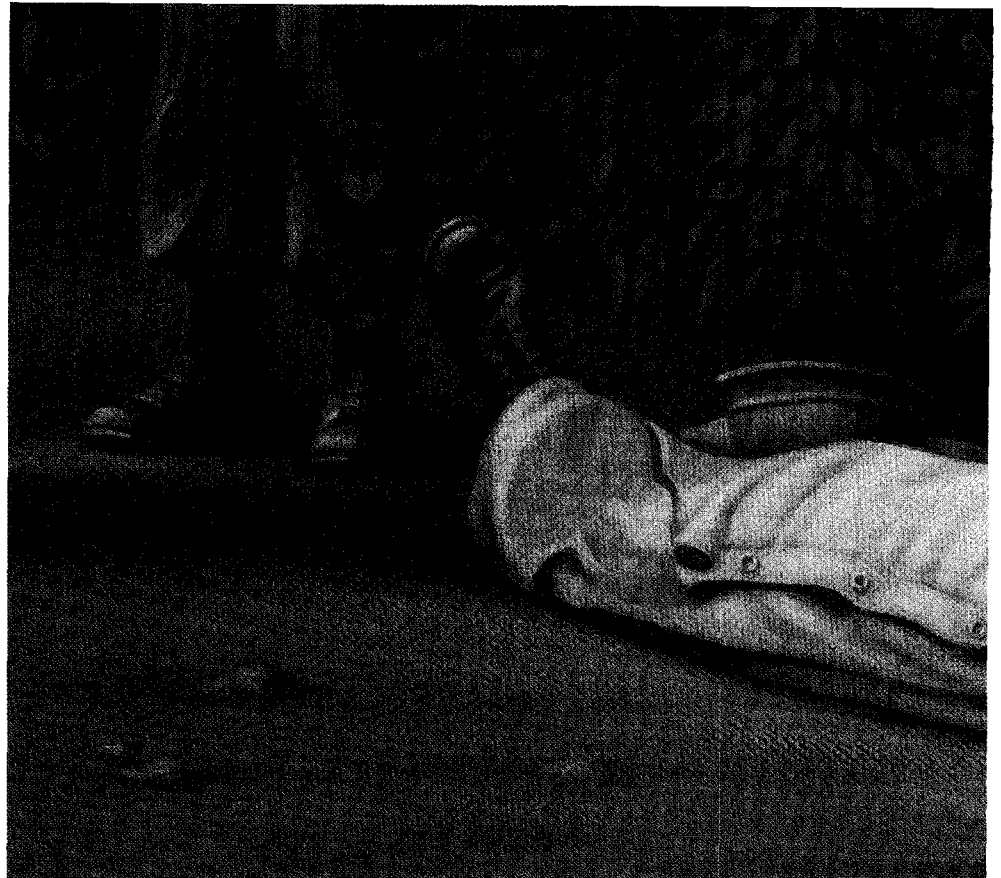
by LARRY HEINEMANN

SECOND Lieutenant Lionel Calhoun McQuade was a Citadel punk, and that's probably what killed him.

He graduated third, with honors, in the class of 1966. He accepted a direct commission in the United States Army, as had his father, General Russell Calhoun McQuade, a hero of the Battle of the Bulge. His grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel Collier Calhoun McQuade, fought with Black Jack Pershing in Mexico and France. And McQuade's great-great-grandfather, Colonel Loudon Clarence McQuade, commanded a South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment that fought valiantly at Gettysburg (or so the family story went), where the good colonel gave up an arm and an eye. All the McQuades were hard-drinking family men who understood the customs of respect and responsibility (*The Call*, as they referred to it) and had served honorably in our country's wars, except for the Spanish-American War (*Let us not dignify it with our participation*) and most particularly the Spanish Civil War (*Not our war; not our kind*).

That's what Lieutenant McQuade's father told him when the elder McQuade judged his son old enough to understand such things. The men who fought in Spain, the elder McQuade said, were premature anti-Fascists. The general could not bring himself to say the word "Communist" but, like Robert E. Lee, referred simply to "those people." In other words, a political embarrassment,

whose services were appropriately shunned when the real war, against the Nazis, began in 1941. Not until Lionel's junior year at the Citadel did he understand that his father had been talking about the Lincoln Brigade—which Lionel came to regard as properly romantic, if militarily inept and politically naive.



The young Lieutenant McQuade arrived at the base-camp orderly room of Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion of the 51st Infantry, near the village of Ap Bo Dat, in the dry summer season during a spell of especially hot weather. In his head were all the stories told him by his father and grandfather,

The men of the platoon saw the new lieutenant coming down the hill, instantly too

imagined opportunities to display his valor, and the idiot ambition to lead brave men in a desperate battle during which he would receive a wound in the extraordinary performance of his duty: nothing fatal or debilitating, mind you, just something clean and presentable—something to show his mother. McQuade's brand-new jungle fatigues and freshly polished boots pegged him for a fucking new guy, as did the twenty-four-karat-gold second-lieutenant's bar (called a butter bar) pinned to his tailored collar and the custom-embroidered white cloth nametag over his right breast pocket.

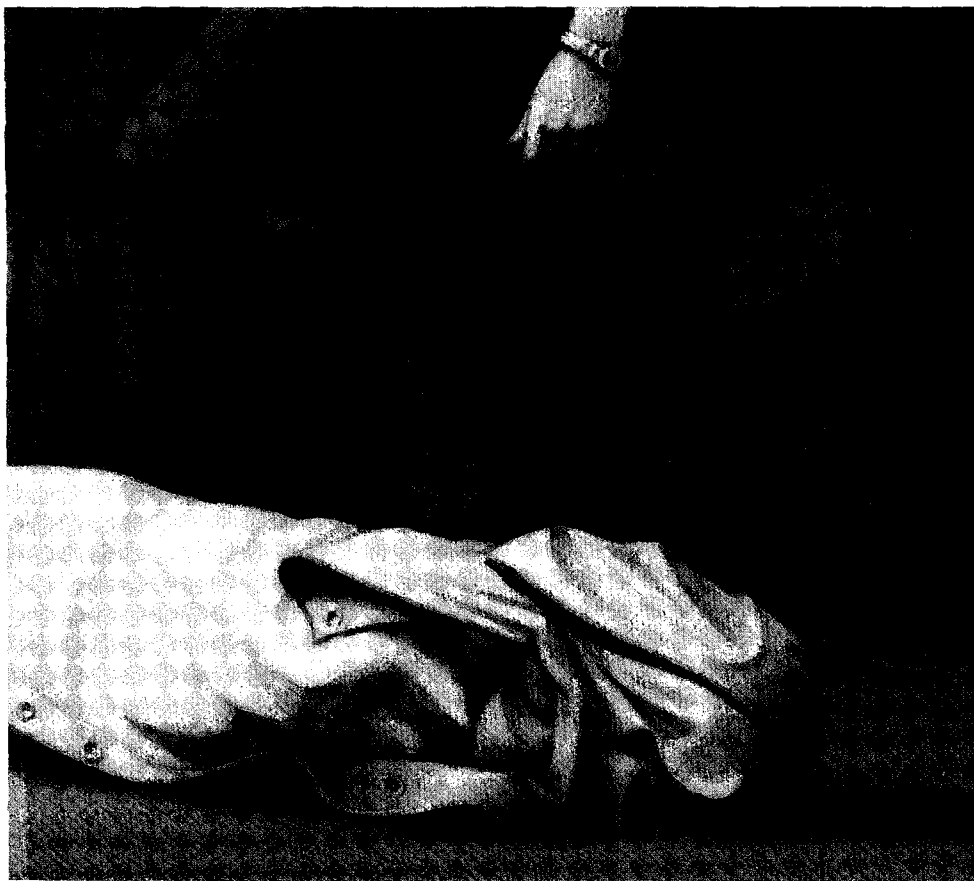
He was ushered into the company commander's office, where Captain Humphrey Eberhart sat at his paper-covered, dust-blown desk going over the morning report, trying to calculate the precise strength of his rifle company: the total manpower minus so many lately killed; minus so many convalescing at the big evacuation hospital at Cu Chi; minus so many walking wounded temporarily excused from duty; minus so many away on R and R in Bangkok, Manila, Sydney, Tokyo, and other such places; minus so many short-timers

terstate from Berkeley to Davis, California, and a commission in the Army Reserve. The towing business had thrived right up to the day he got the letter calling him into active service. Now what? The captain sat in his orderly-room office, sweating his balls off. *I'm going to die.* He knew at the very least that by the time he got done with Ap Bo Dat, his tow-truck business would be in the shit can; his brother-in-law had no head for business and was money-stupid to boot. Eberhart looked down at the names on the casualty list, looked through the screened louvers of his office wall to the village women in clean white blouses washing food trays behind the mess hall, and knew that his was a fool's errand. *Who made this nitwit call?*

McQuade stood at attention in the middle of Eberhart's tiny screened-in office, suffocating along with everyone else in the withering, unbearable heat that boiled down through the open rafters from the roofing tin overhead. Eberhart penciled a two-digit number (87) on a pad of paper and then looked up, casually inviting McQuade to be at ease, to sit down and take a load off his feet.

Captain Eberhart was not a formal man, and McQuade's unwelcome interruption irked him to distraction. *Where do they get these guys? I don't need a God-damned rookie lieutenant. I need a couple of fearless tunnel rats and some more guys who know their way around a sniper's rifle. I need to get the hell out of here.* Pale-faced cheerleading shavetails like McQuade were a dime a dozen and, once outside the wire, were dropping like flies.

The lieutenant gave Eberhart his records and orders, which were passed immediately to First Sergeant Martin Kerby, who sighed, put the envelopes and folder on his desk, and left for lunch. The captain and the young lieutenant exchanged pleasantries, McQuade sitting properly stiff, the paper on



assigned to meaningless house-cat jobs awaiting their orders home; minus so many AWOL (*God knows where they disappeared to*), equals so many able-bodied riflemen, ready to go.

The captain was a short and fuzzy, unhappy man. Back home he had a modest fleet of tow trucks that worked the in-

Eberhart's desk clinging to the captain's forearms.

McQuade was to take the place of First Lieutenant Edwin Lewis, a short-timer and a cool head who had recently died after a banana-grove firefight. Eberhart's letter to Lewis's widow conveyed the archly military-rhetorical regards pre-

ote of his clean green uniform and pasty pallor, and knew they were done for

scribed by Brigade Commander General Blaine Milburn for her husband's "duty to his country," but went on to say in a lengthy and heartfelt postscript that Lewis was that rare officer who actually knew what he was doing, that the whole company honestly looked up to him and keenly felt his loss, and that Ed Lewis's death was the result of astonishing chance, against which nothing can prevail. The captain looked at his new platoon leader and pondered the abyss. He told one of the clerks to show McQuade the hooch he was to share with First Lieutenant John Povey.

Lieutenant McQuade was to take over the third platoon, temporarily commanded by Staff Sergeant Floyd Deal, a very confused young man who had been promoted from the ranks after several acts of "extraordinary courage" and "willful disregard for his own safety." So said the Silver Star citation and promotion orders. Deal was proficient and adroit, but distinctly not command material. As far as the third platoon was concerned, Deal had gone berserk one evening about a month back, shot up a bunch of people, and that was that. Everybody went berserk sooner or later.

When McQuade entered the tent-covered structure that was to be his home, his hoochmate was on his knees, pouring sweat and banging on a straightened box nail with a brick, finishing the floor of rickety shipping-pallet struts covered with lumber from ammunition boxes scrounged from the artillery down the road. Lieutenant John Povey was a handy guy, a University of Wyoming ROTC slob. He was basically a grunt with a master's degree in petroleum engineering who had a knack for repairing air-conditioners—and, by the way, a commission as a first lieutenant in the United States Army.

THE hooch maid, Le Thi Kim (a woman from the nearby village, the mother of three), stood aside under the canvas awning and watched Povey over the low sandbag wall with intense interest. These Americans, so tall, so well fed, were always busy. They were noisy, they smelled funny, they ate too much, and everything came in cans. Where were their pigs? Their chickens? Why did they not eat rice? Where were their women? What on earth were they doing here? These questions baffled everyone she knew. At least the French wore good-looking hats and loved to sing. The Americans? They had all this "stuff." Four years before, Thi Kim's husband had gotten fed up once and for all with the vicious caprices and arrogant stupidities of the Saigon government and joined the National Liberation Front. In all that time she had had one letter from him.

Her father, Le Kham, the village poet and singer, had at first thought that the French had returned, but he could make nothing of this most exotic dialect. One day a young American military doctor, Captain Hilton Hayes, came to

the village to look down throats, thump on backs with his fingers, listen to coughs, and dispense aspirin, while a senior medic demonstrated to the deeply offended, excruciatingly polite village women how to bathe children properly with Ivory soap.

Le Kham arrived at the pagoda where the American jeeps were parked carrying a pot of fresh tea, small cups, and gifts of fruit to welcome the visitors formally on behalf of the village. Immediately the examinations ceased, the villagers stood back, a chair suddenly appeared from the crowd in the doorway, and the old man sat down, in his cleanest peasant rags, to compose himself. Captain Hayes spoke only halting Vietnamese, and at first thought that Le Kham was pulling his leg, asking him what part of France he came from. The young doctor said that he came from Alabama, and tried not to make a face as he drank the aromatic, bitter tea through his teeth. Le Kham sipped his tea with elegant ease and, speaking slowly, explained that he had never heard of the Alabama province of France. How far was it from Paris? Was it more than a day's walk?

Oh, yes, the young doctor said, trying not to laugh out loud. You had to walk in a westerly direction quite a ways, then swim some, and then walk some more.

The old man stroked his long, thinnish chin whiskers and tried to imagine all this, until one of the young medics produced an atlas from his green canvas medical bag and showed the old man that Alabama was in the southern United States of America.

"America," the old man said, nodding his head deeply just as he did when he told his grandchildren the story of the crane and the turtle. "America," he repeated, and then launched into a story he had heard many years before about Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln: How one man lived on a hill and was rich and smart, and the other came from a small village and was a great poet, but poor; how one had invented democracy and the other had saved it. The way the old man told the story, one man had invented democracy much as the French Catholics' God of Heaven had invented Eve, and the other had saved it much as the old man tended the farm of his ancestors. Captain Hayes was left to ponder this story for the rest of his time at Ap Bo Dat, and years later, still puzzled, he could recall that whole afternoon with a staggering clarity.

Le Thi Kim stood under the canvas awning of Lieutenant Povey's tent watching him punch box nails into the floorboards with that brick, and wondered why he didn't get a hammer. *It would be so much easier*; but then, these Americans were always doing things the hard way. Thi Kim liked to watch the tall, robust John Povey; she thought him very handsome, and wished that her husband were home.

Lieutenant McQuade introduced himself and laid his bags on Ed Lewis's cot in the corner. He small-talked with Povey, eyeballed Thi Kim, and excused himself to fetch a drink of

water. It was early in the afternoon, and God-awful hot. The lieutenant took a long drink and then, bending down on one knee, bowed his head under the spigot and let the water run over the back of his neck. He did not feel well, but went in search of his command.

THE third platoon was down by the creek with the rest of the company, stripped to the waist and sweating, filling sandbags for the new bunkers under the careful and expert supervision of the brigade executive officer, Major Cecil Harsch, a man who loved nothing better than to tell other people what to do.

Major Harsch had the United States Army technical manual about proper bunker construction in the thigh pocket of his crisply ironed fatigues, and he made sure that the men finished the job with panache by patting the sandbags square, plumb, flush, and level with the flats of their shovels. Two weeks after the rains began the bunker sandbags would be as hard as rock. "Precision" and "utility" were two words the major used until he got tired of listening to himself talk. According to him, these several bunkers were going to be the pride of the Camp Bo Dat bunker line. He stood under the awning shade of his construction command post and swelled with pride in the blistering afternoon heat.

The major had never lifted a shovelful of dirt in his life, except to plant his wife's rose of Sharon bushes, so he could not understand for the life of him what was taking the men so long. It was hot, dry work, regardless of the major's teamwork-is-everything, can-do attitude, and it was made worse by the bright Southeast Asian sun and the melting afternoon heat. In the village everyone moved slowly and kept to the shade, and, as a general thing, no one but a fool was outdoors. Still, the major constantly exhorted the men to hurry up and keep at it.

The men looked at Major Harsch and thought that he should just hustle his ass right back up to brigade headquarters and let well enough alone.

Lieutenant McQuade walked down the hill toward the sandbag detail, squared his cap down over his eyes, adjusted the belt of his .45 caliber semi-automatic Colt pistol around his waist, and searched the crowd of tans for Sergeant Floyd Deal, who, he was told, had unmistakable scars.

The young sergeant had heard that a lieutenant named McQuade was soon to take over command of the platoon, so when some fucking new guy came pounding down the hillside, pushing soft dirt ahead of him at every stride, Deal stood up, dropped his cigarette, put on his jungle-fatigue shirt and steel helmet, and came to attention long before McQuade was anywhere near him. Who else could this be but the new lieutenant, come to punch his ticket? The men of the platoon looked up from their work, saw McQuade coming down the hillside, instantly took note of his clean green uni-

form and pasty pallor, looked around at one another, and muttered, "We're fucked." In plain sight of the wood line, not fifty meters downrange, Deal threw the young lieutenant a crackling crisp hand salute the like of which McQuade had not seen since the afternoon of his Citadel graduation in Charleston, South Carolina.

Lieutenant McQuade advised the young sergeant of his unbuttoned shirt and instructed him to have the men fall in yonder between the tents and the wingtank showers. He had taken a busy little tour for himself through the pathetic platoon tents and wished to speak to the men immediately.

Sergeant Deal buttoned his shirt and advised right back that a platoon formation in plain sight of the wood line was unwise. "A cluster fuck is bad for business, sir." A thing unheard of as far back as the platoon memory and legend would go. "Be that as it may," McQuade said, "I want to talk to the men; call them into formation." With extreme apology in his tone, Sergeant Deal turned and shouted that the third platoon was to fall in.

What?

Deal repeated himself twice.

The men of the platoon straightened their backs, moaning and groaning, but complied. Warily they dropped their shovels and sandbags, gathered their hats and caps, their rifles and such, and walked up the hill to the tents with grumbling skepticism. Cluster fuck or no, who was this clown? For a gag, Sergeant Deal had the men formally dress-right-dress, ready, front. And, going along with the gag, in an instant the third platoon was standing tall with rifles, shotguns, and grenade launchers at sling arms.

Then Deal turned to McQuade, cranked another showy roundhouse salute, and said that the platoon was formed. Sir!

The rest of the company—the sandbag detail—stopped work long enough to watch in blunt disbelief. Pucker-assed, eager-beaver fucking new guys—that was all the explanation anyone needed.

Lieutenant McQuade ordered the platoon to stand at ease. They slacked their stance and watched the wood line, ready to drop, roll, and scatter at the first sign. No one paid any mind to the lieutenant; this was nuts. McQuade introduced himself (as if anyone wanted to know), said that he had been through the tents and could not believe the platoon's sorry state of affairs, and commenced the first of what came to be known as Lionel's Limp-Dicked Cop Lectures. He finished by announcing an inspection that evening, and then ordered the platoon to attention, dismissed them, and walked away.

The platoon could not believe their ears. *Junk on the bunk? Who is this asshole?* But the young lieutenant was not kidding in the least.

The platoon stood in formation with the sweat rolling down into their boots and said, "That's one."

IT HAS ITS MOTHER'S EYES

its brother's app

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ITS FATHER'S STATURE AND

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THE company was sent not many weeks later to Landing Zone Squirt, a run-down forward support base named for General Milburn's dog. This was not good. LZ Squirt was very near a VC supply trail and a rumored tunnel complex. Things were always busy. The first thing that morning—"early dawn," Lieutenant McQuade called it—the company gathered with practiced nonchalance at the chopper pad and waited for the lift ships.

The other officers had persuaded Lieutenant McQuade to take the embroidered white nametags from his shirts and leave his twenty-four-karat gold collar insignia behind. By then everyone knew who he was and didn't need to be reminded morning, noon, and night.

Less than a week after their arrival at LZ Squirt, McQuade decided that the platoon's ambush patrol was not operating well enough to suit him, so one evening he insisted on taking charge. Sergeant Deal said that he would be right proud to sit at the radio there at the LZ and take the lieutenant's hourly situation reports. The lieutenant said that his call sign would be "Apple Pie Six": "Apple Pie" for "ambush patrol," "Six" because that number was always used to signify the officer in charge.

Everyone rolled his eyes.

The seven men detailed to go along gathered at the south end of the perimeter at deep dusk. Each man wore his flak jacket (a thick, greasy, and awkward zippered vest), six grenades, two fifty-round belts of ammunition for the ma-

chine gun, two Claymore anti-personnel mines, and as many canteens of water as he could carry. Specialist Fourth Class Adriane Harper carried the M-60 machine gun. Private First Class John Otaki brought his sniper's rifle with night-vision starlight scope.

Specialist Fourth Class Arthur Comstock, the platoon medic, carried his aid bag, which included, among other things, a dozen shots of quarter-grain morphine and two large bottles of government-issue drugs. Comstock gave each man a dozen amphetamines and a dozen barbiturates: uppers to cut the trail, and downers to keep them on their way. By the time the patrol got to the ambush site, everyone but McQuade had the range.

The men left the perimeter after dark, and McQuade had trouble reading the map by moonlight, so it was well past midnight by the time the patrol, hot and sweaty, reached the ambush coordinates. The lieutenant noisily supervised the placement of the Claymores and the machine gun; by turns several of the men asked him to be quiet and not stand in the road. *This is an ambush, sir.* When McQuade was satisfied that everything was done to his specifications, the men settled in for the night and looked at one another skeptically as they drank from their first canteens.

Two Viet Cong from a nearby village had followed along behind the patrol at a discreet distance. Hue Pho carried an old-fashioned bold-action Chinese SKS and three rounds; Hoang Dieu carried an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade)

AN EXPLANATION

While you were
at the post office,
twenty-five-six-seven
quail flowed through
your garden, dividing
around the fish pool

while the dog, that
crypto-rationalist, lay
on the deck as though
nothing wonderful
were passing the lantana

and nodding through
the asparagus and right up
the path, innocent as
a nursery school class.

Even before I saw them
I knew by their plaintive
quirking who they were,
and came out afterwards
to see the path
dimpled with their passing,

which is why I'm
still here, whispering
at the threshold
of the woods.

—BRENDAN GALVIN

launcher with a single round, locked and loaded. The RPG was an anti-tank weapon, but it was very effective against ordinary infantry troops. The Vietnamese could see that this man was lost. They waited until the Americans were settled, watching the young officer with fascinated pity while he stood in the cart trail talking and pointing, arguing. What was this man doing?

Pho and Dieu moved slowly and quietly to a place twenty meters behind the patrol. Dieu decided to aim for the distinct silhouette of a tree just in front of the American officer. He would hit the tree head-high; the burning-hot magnesium shrapnel would spray the men underneath. Pho would fire his three rounds, and then the two of them would run to the left until they came to the footpath that would take them back to their spider holes, which were connected to the Hang Da tunnels. Several hours passed; the Americans became drowsy with boredom despite the amphetamines. When Pho heard the lieutenant talking in careful whispers on his radio, he motioned for Dieu to fire his one round. Dieu rose on one knee, settled the weapon on his shoulder, aimed at the tree, and squeezed the trigger. The RPG hit the tree in a brilliant splash of sparkling shrapnel. Pho immediately pulled off his three rounds, one at a time. Without waiting to see what happened, Pho picked up his three brass cartridges, and the two of them took to their heels.

In that moment of chaos the ambush patrol clicked off their Claymores and fired their weapons. Only Private First Class Franklin Giacoppo and young Sergeant Gary Lautner understood that the RPG had come from behind them, and they turned to fire. Almost immediately the firing ceased. Three men were dead. The lieutenant radioed for help. The patrol gathered its gear, packed up the corpses, and quickly moved to another location.

The men looked around at one another in the clean light of day while they drank the last of their canteen water and the dew gathered on their clothes. They waited for the medevac helicopter, the meat wagon, and said, "That's two."

SERGEANT Deal later talked informally with McQuade, explaining the situation. Comstock talked with him when he gave McQuade the lindane powder for his crabs. Even John Otaki, the platoon sniper, took him aside. Calm down, lieutenant. Be cool. What are you trying to prove? All quietly and bluntly, man to man. Sergeant Lautner told him point-blank to get his head out of his ass and cut the bullshit. But McQuade came from the Citadel and could not be persuaded of anything.

The last straw came several weeks later, when the company was being flown out to Fire Base Kelly, named for the dancer—one of General Milburn's favorite Hollywood performers. Private First Class Humberto Reyes, a Tucson Chicanos, sat in the helicopter doorway with his feet on the skid,

armed with a shotgun. He was always the first man to hit the ground. Lieutenant McQuade, who was pep-talking the door gunner, turned to look the man full in the face and bumped Reyes out the door. Reyes tumbled head over heels, almost in slow motion, and cursed McQuade up one side and down the other in his finest pool-hall Spanish. "Fuck you, McQuade! God damn your eyes!" and other such things. Then he howled until he was out of earshot.

Sing it, Coyote!

The pilot, the door gunner, McQuade, and the others looked down in horror as Reyes fell to earth, finally disappearing in the thick jungle canopy a thousand feet below.

The company landed at LZ Kelly. The third platoon gathered in turmoil around McQuade and Eberhart, outraged and shocked. After considerable mollifying discussion the platoon calmed down and took up its place among the bunkers, still snakebit. The men looked at one another as they laid out their gear and said, "That, my man, is three."

YOUNG Sergeant Lautner was beside himself; he had had enough. McQuade was a menace, a fuck-up; he was getting people killed almost for spite. A shrewd look came into Lautner's eyes.

So, when next the company was back in Bo Dat for a couple days' stand-down, the third platoon decided to kill him. Solicitations were made for a bounty, and nearly everyone ponied up. Lautner held the pot.

Someone from the mail-room poker game volunteered an old-fashioned grenade; it resembled a pineapple. Private Giacoppo said he would rig it to McQuade's collapsible wood-and-canvas cot, booby-trap fashion.

Lieutenant Povey conveniently left the next afternoon for his R and R in Honolulu, where he was to meet his wife.

Lieutenant McQuade and the other company officers were invited that evening to attend a birthday-party barbecue for General Milburn at his double-wide air-conditioned trailer behind brigade headquarters. The general loved to party; the company officers would be gone most of the evening.

Giacoppo waited a good long while and then blackened his face, took the grenade, a spool of green cloth tape, and a length of notched bamboo, and headed for the ditch that bordered officers' country. The rest of the platoon smoked some grass, drank some beer, and went to bed, knowing they would not get any sleep. There was little moonlight. Slowly and by stealth Giacoppo made his way along the ditch that had lately been deepened in anticipation of the fall rains, and sneaked in among the officers' tents. At last he came to McQuade and Povey's tent. He lifted the flap and went inside on his hands and knees. It was not difficult to see which cot belonged to whom, even in that little light. Povey never hung anything up. McQuade kept all his gear neat and his personal effects in waterproof ammunition cans.

Giacoppo got down on his back under the head of McQuade's cot. This was going to be a piece of cake. Mostly by feel he taped the frag to the wooden cross leg of the cot, keeping the piece of bamboo between his teeth like a new pencil. When he had satisfied himself that the grenade was snug, he deftly pulled on the cotter pin until it was only barely attached. Then, still feeling with his fingers, he gently wedged the bamboo under the cot between the pull ring of the grenade and the musty canvas beneath McQuade's pillow.

McQuade's mother had sent him a heavy linen pillow case, which Le Thi Kim had filled to bursting with chicken and goose feathers—of which there were plenty in the village.

Giacoppo carefully rolled away from his work. The whole thing had taken seven minutes by the clock. He silently gathered up his gear and left the hooch, making his way among the ropes and pegs along the path to the ditch and then back to the quiet platoon tents. He cleaned his face at the washstand, sat on his cot, took off his boots, checked his rifle, and stretched out. The platoon heard the

squish of the soap, the splash of the water, the stretch of the cot canvas, the snap of the bootlaces through the eyelets, the tick and clack of the rifle stock, the draw and hush of breath.

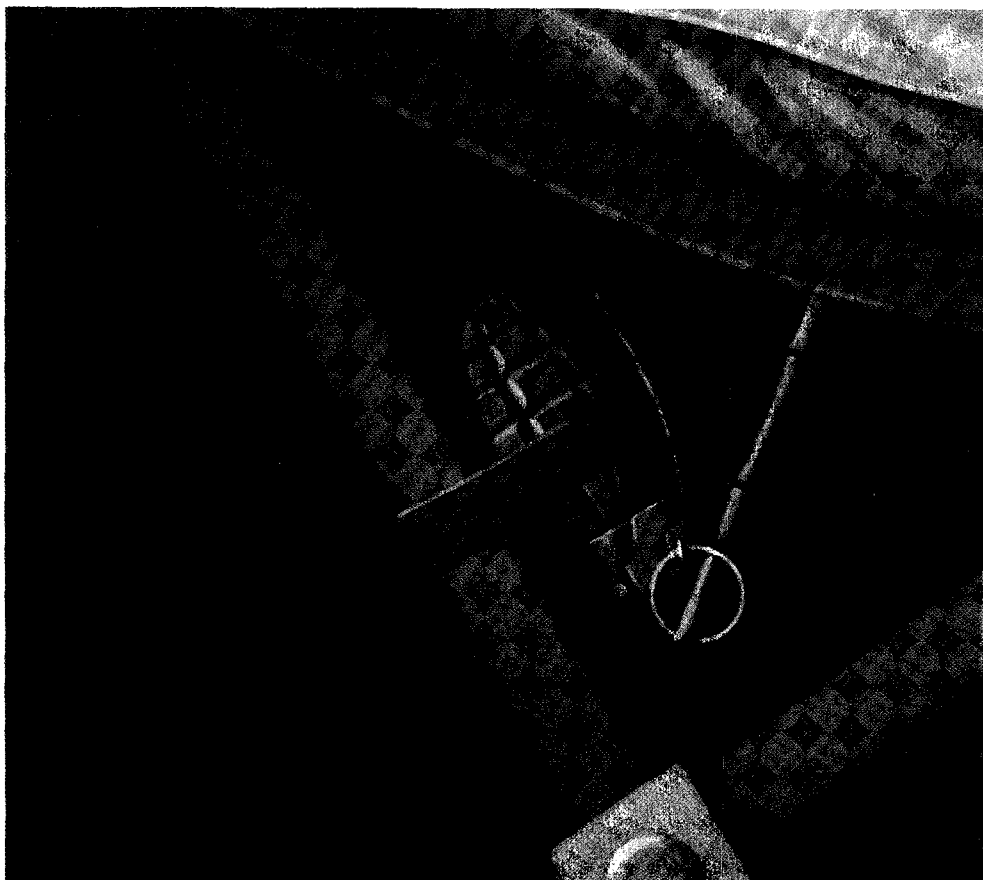
Giacoppo lit a joint. The sweet, cloying bouquet of marijuana filled the tent. The platoon waited, sweating in the midnight heat.

McQuade and the other officers arrived not long after in two jeeps, drunk and loud. The general had provided steaks flown in from Bangkok, good liquor, and a USO troupe of young Filipino singers who could be counted on to be agreeable. Everyone had gotten laid.

The officers walked across the company street and in among their tents. One by one they peeled off, wished one another good night, and went to bed. When McQuade's turn came, he stopped, staggering; he was so drunk his body tingled. He told Captain Eberhart he would see him in the morning; he had several matters of platoon discipline to discuss. He stepped into his tent, walking the four paces across Povey's wobbly floor to his cot. He sat down heavily and took off his boots, not thinking a thing in the world, not even of the gorgeous young woman who

had given him the blow job of his life just an hour before.

He fluffed his pillow, laid himself out, settled his head well in, and closed his eyes. And in that instant the stick of notched bamboo pushed down against the grenade's pull ring. The cotter pin and the length of bamboo fell to the floor



with a slight clatter; the released spoon handle of the grenade arced through the air, making a distinct *sping* sound, and landed between the edge of Povey's floor and the knee-high wall of sandbags that surrounded each officer's tent. The fuse burned for four and a half seconds, barely time for the lieutenant thickly to ponder the odd noise beneath his cot.

McQuade never uttered a sound. The grenade went off with a flash of light quicker than the scratch of a kitchen match and a sound familiar to everyone. The convulsion was sufficient to lift the upper part of McQuade's body clear of the bedding and blow the back of his head off to the eyes. It dismantled the cot, tore the near sandbags to shreds, shattered and blackened Povey's floor, and blew holes in the tent canvas above. The shrapnel pieces, as large as lozenges, cut deeply into McQuade's back.

All the men in the company were suddenly awake and instantly alert, belly down on the dirt floors of the tents, manhandling loaded rifles and pistols and grenade launchers. *Incoming! Sappers! But that was a grenade. What the fuck?* There were calls and shouts. Only Lieutenant Lionel McQuade did not respond.

Captain Eberhart told Sergeant Deal by radio to find the lieutenant. The last place he looked was McQuade's tent, which was still thick with grenade smoke and smelled of rum and blood. Sergeant Deal turned on the light hanging down from the ridgepole. McQuade looked fine except for

tent. A fragging, he immediately surmised. Here were the pull ring and cotter pin of a grenade, and snippets of green cloth tape were blown all over the hooch. The minute particulars were noted for his report. Then he and the other MP officers took over Captain Eberhart's orderly room for the interviews and interrogations.

The provost called each man in the company one by one to be interviewed.

"Stand at ease, trooper."

"Yes, sir."

"Where were you when the explosion occurred?"

"I was asleep in my tent, sir."

"Did you see or hear anything?"

"No, sir. I did not see or hear anything."

"What is your opinion of Lieutenant McQuade?"

"Lieutenant McQuade arrived only four months ago, sir. Citadel, sir."

"Do you have any suspicions about who did this?"

"No, sir, I do not have any suspicions."

Then, almost slyly: "There may well be something in it for you, trooper."

"If I think of anything, if I hear anything, yes, sir, I will immediately communicate it to Captain Eberhart or yourself. Sir."

"Dismissed."

The provost didn't finish until well after breakfast. By then Graves Registration had sent a truck to fetch the lieutenant's remains. A fragging was a serious matter, best got to the bottom of as quickly as possible. The God-damn miscreant would get a general court martial, go to the God-damn disciplinary barracks at Fort Leavenworth, and break rocks until the day he died.

The platoon agreed with everyone in the company that the death of Lieutenant McQuade was a terrible shame, and wondered out loud who could be responsible. Le Thi Kim was powerfully impressed that the young and handsome lieutenant could die in such a way. It was a story she would tell her grandchildren. She wept, thinking of her husband and the other men of the village, and then she cleaned up the mess.

Lieutenant Povey came back from Hawaii a week later, deeply refreshed. He expressed his astonishment at the death of McQuade, helped Thi Kim finish cleaning up, and repaired his floor. Four weeks later the divorce papers arrived—a neat little scheme that Povey and his wife had cooked up to get



the blood still coming from the back of his head. In fact, blood and feathers were everywhere. The sagging muslin tent liner hung down like slaw; the hooch was a ruin.

The company officers and senior NCOs gathered, weapons in hand; they were shocked and cautious. Captain Eberhart and the others knew instantly that this was a fragging. Eberhart took First Sergeant Martin Kerby and the mess sergeant to the orderly room, where he called brigade to report what had happened. Meanwhile, the other officers and NCOs went to roust the men. No incoming, no attack, Sergeant Deal told the third platoon and everyone else standing near. Lieutenant McQuade got fragged. Pity the poor lieutenant, the men of the platoon said among themselves.

Two dozen MPs with gun jeeps and briefcases of paperwork arrived in a shower of gravel followed by a thick cloud of road dust. In the dark of the moon, in that too-obvious way that all cops have, the MPs surrounded the enlisted men's tents. They stood casually beside their machine guns, which, the company saw plainly enough, were locked and loaded.

Everyone's weapon was locked and loaded.

The brigade provost marshal visited Lieutenant McQuade's

him compassionate leave. The Red Cross hastily approved it. A dramatically astonished Povey smiled as he packed his gear, snapped his fingers in the air, and said it was that easy.

Giacoppo saved the \$500 bounty and took it and his other savings on R and R to the Wild West Pecos Hotel, in Bangkok, where he embarked on a culinary and sexual rampage. Given the stories Giacoppo brought back, it was regarded by everyone in the platoon as money well spent.

AS the weeks and months went by, the men who knew of the matter left for home, one by one. Despite promises to the contrary, they never encountered one another again.

Floyd Deal went back to New Orleans, told no one he was a veteran, let his hair grow, got a job on an offshore oil rig, and was lost overboard during a platform fire.

Adriane Harper came to the end of his tour intact and went home one grateful young man. He spent the next couple of years smoking grass and collecting guns. Later he was convicted of manslaughter for shotgunning a Halloween prankster. Later still, he himself was killed by the New York State Police in the Attica prison riot.

John Otaki also got home in one piece. He worked as a mail carrier for the post office in Oakland, where he was well regarded for his goodhearted cheerfulness, but he went insane in 1989, after watching his sister and her family die in the collapse of Highway 880 during the World Series earthquake.

Arthur Comstock went home to medical school and took to heart that portion of the Hippocratic oath that reminds physicians to do no harm. He took up the practice of family medicine in St. Genevieve County, Missouri, where he concerned himself with home births and broken legs, school shots and strep throats, mononucleosis and the diseases of the rural poor.

Franklin Giacoppo was badly wounded in the legs. He recovered, but because of unanticipated medical complications brought on by incompetent treatment at the Cu Chi medical facility, he was given a discharge, and went back to Milwaukee to help his father run the family hardware store. He displayed his Purple Heart above the cash register to impress the customers, but would not talk of it or the war with anyone—especially his father, who was an Okinawa Marine.

Gary Lautner, whose idea the fragging had been, made enough money importing marijuana from Mexico to put himself through law school, worked for the Illinois state's attorney in Chicago, taught law at the University of Chicago, was appointed to the federal bench in 1982, and soon after became a well-functioning alcoholic. He never married.

The day young Sergeant Lautner left the platoon, he threw his gear under the stretch canvas seat of the helicopter that had come to deliver some mail and the daily supplies, but before he stepped aboard, he looked around at the company

and wondered, among other things, how many lives had been saved by the killing of McQuade.

He had no way of knowing, of course, but there were many—many, including Lautner's own.

The murder of Lieutenant Lionel Calhoun McQuade was attributed to a person or persons unknown, and never solved. The paperwork floated up the chain of command from the brigade provost to the division provost to the Criminal Investigations Division in Saigon, and finally to the Pentagon. The manila routing slip was a scribble of initials. In 1975 the folder was marked "Inactive/Unsolved" and forwarded to the National Archives in Suitland, Maryland, and the McQuade name passed from American military history.

IN the fall of 1982, on a whim and overpowered by curiosity, John Povey, who then lived in Denver with his wife and three daughters, packed a bag and went to Washington, D.C., for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He skipped the parade to find himself a place on the grassy slope up a ways from the brand-new, lustrous black marble. He was impressed by and grateful for it, if astonished at its spiritual simplicity. Soon the crowd gathered thickly around him. When the speeches began, a tall man with straight black hair, dressed in faded jeans and a vintage uniform field jacket, began pulling half pints of Jack Daniel's from the inside of his coat and passing them to the perfect strangers within his arm's reach. Povey and the others cracked the seals, swept the hand-sized bottles around in a mellow, sweeping toast, and drank the hard, hot liquor in obvious gulps while the speakers talked on. Later Povey and the man with straight black hair elbowed their way down to panel forty-six of the eastern wing of the memorial, which pointed directly at the Washington Monument. Povey put his hand to the marble and squeezed his fingertips into the deep-cut grooves; unexpected tears filled his eyes. There were Lewis, Eberhart, Reyes, and the rest. Lionel Calhoun McQuade's name was in among them. After a moment Povey turned to the tall man. "See this McQuade? What an asshole." With the crush of the crowd at his back and half a pint of whiskey in his stomach, it was the only word Povey could think of just at that moment.

The man looked at Povey, let his eyes wander down to where the marble panels were the highest and the crowd the thickest, and said, "He ain't the only one." Then he splashed what little was left in his bottle on the face of the memorial and rubbed it in with the flat of his hand, as if body-warm whiskey on a cold November day were the very thing to scour clean the polished black marble. The two men watched the whiskey trickle down through the deep, precise engravings. Then the tall man with straight black hair told Povey he would see him around, stepped backward into the crowd, and disappeared. ☞

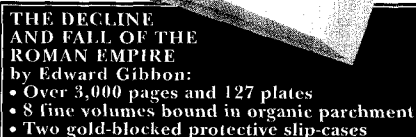
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Do We Consume Too Much?

by MARK SAGOFF

Discussions of the future of the planet are dominated by those who believe that an expanding world economy will use up natural resources and those who see no reasons, environmental or otherwise, to limit economic growth.

Neither side has it right

IN 1994, when delegates from around the world gathered in Cairo for the International Conference on Population and Development, representatives from developing countries protested that a baby born in the United States will consume during its lifetime twenty times as much of the world's resources as an African or an Indian baby. The problem for the world's environment, they argued, is overconsumption in the North, not overpopulation in the South.

Consumption in industrialized nations "has led to overexploitation of the resources of developing countries," a speaker from Kenya declared. A delegate from Antigua reproached the wealthiest 20 percent of the world's population for consuming 80 percent of the goods and services produced from the earth's resources.

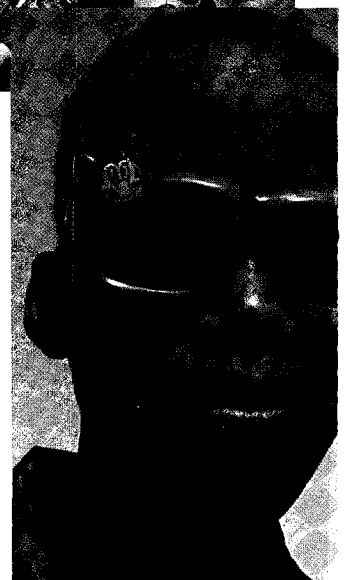
Do we consume too much? To some, the answer is self-evident. If there is only so much food, timber, petroleum, and other material to go around, the more we consume, the less must be available for others. The global economy cannot grow indefinitely on a finite planet. As populations increase and economies expand, natural resources must be depleted; prices will rise, and humanity—especially the poor and future generations at all income levels—will suffer as a result.

Other reasons to suppose we consume too much are less often stated though also widely believed. Of these the simplest—a lesson we learn from our parents and from literature since the Old Testament—may be the best: although



LEFT AND BELOW: PETER MENZEL; RIGHT: MARTIN PARR/MAGNUM

Material culture, from right: plastic eyewear, Kouakourou, Mali; the Mall of America, Bloomington, Minnesota; "Let-Us-Hide" for valuables, Fujita, Japan.





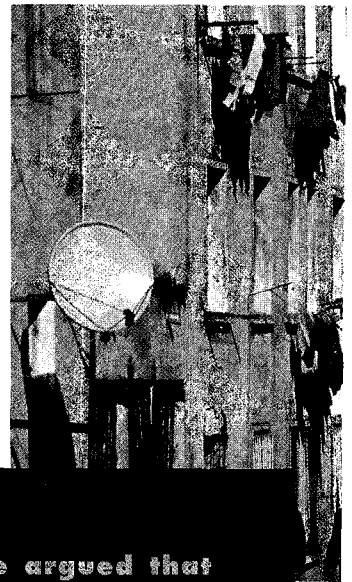
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we must satisfy basic needs, a good life is not one devoted to amassing material possessions; what we own comes to own us, keeping us from fulfilling commitments that give meaning to life, such as those to family, friends, and faith. The appreciation of nature also deepens our lives. As we consume more, however, we are more likely to transform the natural world, so that less of it will remain for us to appreciate.

The reasons for protecting nature are often religious or moral. As the philosopher Ronald Dworkin points out, many Americans believe that we have an obligation to protect species which goes beyond our own well-being; we "think we should admire and protect them because they are important in themselves, and not just if or because we or others want or enjoy them." In a recent survey Americans from various walks of life agreed by large majorities with the statement "Because God created the natural world, it is wrong to abuse it." The anthropologists who conducted this survey concluded that "divine creation is the closest concept American culture provides to express the sacredness of nature."

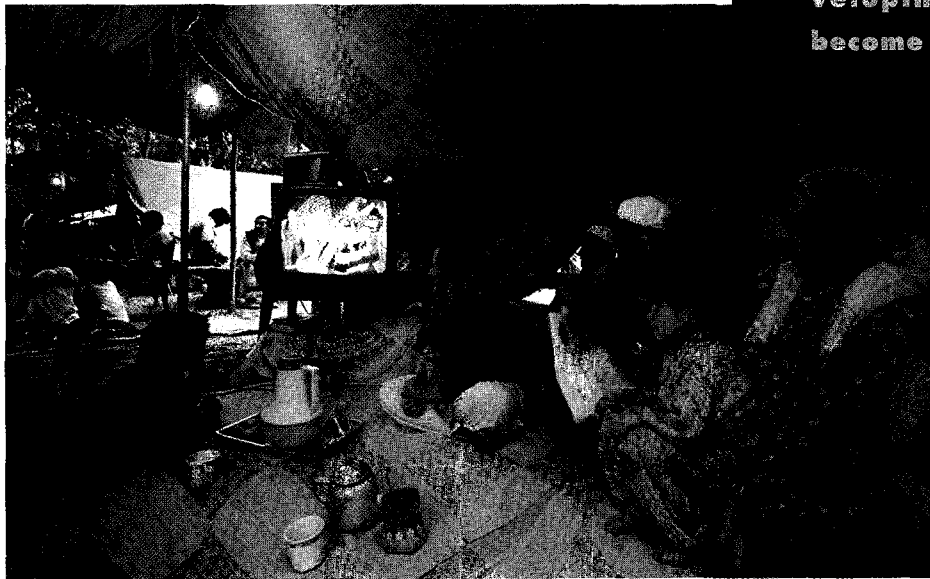
During the nineteenth century preservationists forthrightly gave ethical and spiritual reasons for protecting the natural world. John Muir condemned the "temple destroyers,

Below: technology and family life in Afghanistan. Right: satellite dishes, Burrel, Albania



Many have argued that economic activity, affluence, and growth automatically lead to resource depletion and ecological collapse. But without economic growth the environmental and population problems of the developing world will only become worse.

STEVE McCURRY/MAGNUM



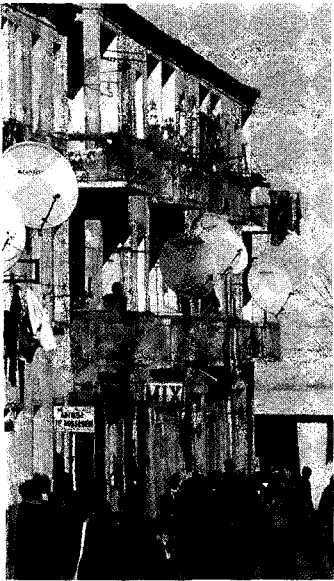
devotees of ravaging commercialism" who "instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty dollar." This was not a call for better cost-benefit analysis: Muir described nature not as a commodity but as a companion. Nature is sacred, Muir held, whether or not resources are scarce.

Philosophers such as Emerson and Thoreau thought of nature as full of divinity. Walt Whitman celebrated a leaf of

grass as no less than the journeywork of the stars: "After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, love, and so on," he wrote in *Specimen Days*, and "found that none of these finally satisfy, or permanently wear—what remains? Nature remains." These philosophers thought of nature as

a refuge from economic activity, not as a resource for it.

Today those who wish to protect the natural environment rarely offer ethical or spiritual reasons for the policies they favor. Instead they say we are running out of resources or causing the collapse of ecosystems on which we depend. Predictions of resource scarcity appear objective and scientific, whereas pronouncements that nature is sacred or that greed is bad appear judgmental or even embarrassing in a secular so-



ciety. Prudential and economic arguments, moreover, have succeeded better than moral or spiritual ones in swaying public policy.

These prudential and economic arguments are not likely to succeed much longer. It is simply wrong to believe that nature sets physical limits to economic growth—that is, to prosperity and the production and consumption of goods and services on which it is based. The idea that in-

creasing consumption will inevitably lead to depletion and scarcity, as plausible as it may seem, is mistaken both in principle and in fact. It is based on four misconceptions.

Misconception No. 1: We Are Running Out of Raw Materials

IN the 1970s Paul Ehrlich, a biologist at Stanford University, predicted that global shortages would soon send prices for food, fresh water, energy, metals, paper, and other materials sharply higher. “It seems certain,” Paul and Anne Ehrlich wrote in *The End of Affluence* (1974), “that energy shortages will be with us for the rest of the century, and that before 1985 mankind will enter a genuine age of scarcity in which many things besides energy will be in short supply.” Crucial materials would near depletion during the 1980s, Ehrlich predicted, pushing prices out of reach. “Starvation among people will be accompanied by starvation of industries for the materials they require.”

Things have not turned out as Ehrlich expected. In the early 1990s real prices for food overall fell. Raw materials—including energy resources—are generally more abundant and less expensive today than they were twenty years ago. When Ehrlich wrote, economically recoverable world reserves of petroleum stood at 640 billion barrels. Since that time reserves have *increased* by more than 50 percent, reaching more than 1,000 billion barrels in 1989. They have held steady in spite of rising consumption. The pre-tax real price of gasoline was lower during this decade than at any other time since 1947. The World Energy Council announced in 1992 that “fears of imminent [resource] exhaustion that were widely held 20 years ago are now considered to have been unfounded.”

The World Resources Institute, in a 1994–1995 report, referred to “the frequently expressed concern that high levels

of consumption will lead to resource depletion and to physical shortages that might limit growth or development opportunity.” Examining the evidence, however, the institute said that “the world is not yet running out of most nonrenewable resources and is not likely to, at least in the next few decades.” A 1988 report from the Office of Technology Assessment concluded, “The nation’s future has probably never been less constrained by the cost of natural resources.”

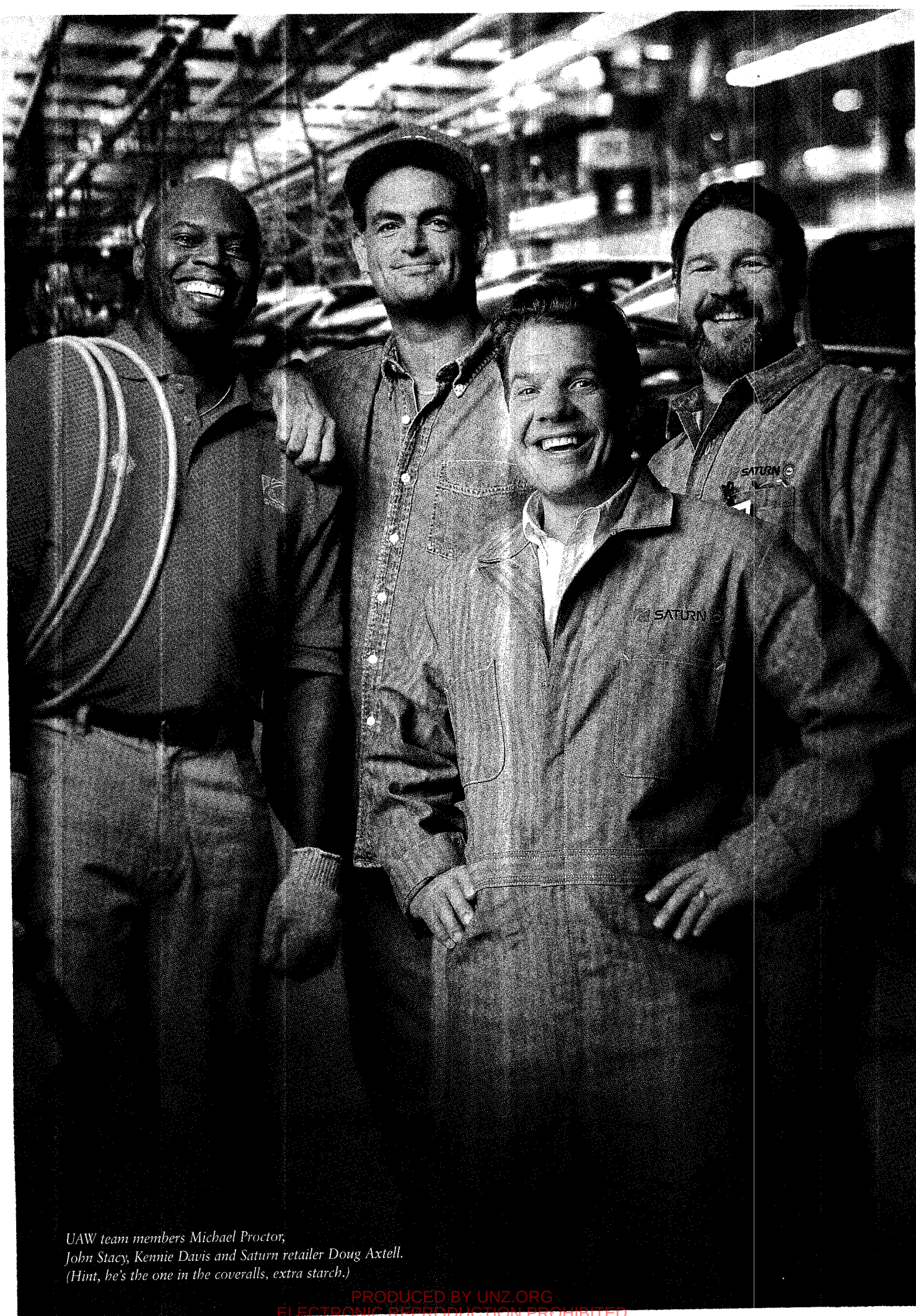
It is reasonable to expect that as raw materials become less expensive, they will be more rapidly depleted. This expectation is also mistaken. From 1980 to 1990, for example, while the prices of resource-based commodities declined (the price of rubber by 40 percent, cement by 40 percent, and coal by almost 50 percent), reserves of most raw materials increased. Economists offer three explanations.

First, with regard to subsoil resources, the world becomes ever more adept at discovering new reserves and exploiting old ones. Exploring for oil, for example, used to be a hit-or-miss proposition, resulting in a lot of dry holes. Today oil companies can use seismic waves to help them create precise computer images of the earth. New methods of extraction—for example, using bacteria to leach metals from low-grade ores—greatly increase resource recovery. Reserves of resources “are actually functions of technology,” one analyst has written. “The more advanced the technology, the more reserves become known and recoverable.”

Second, plentiful resources can be used in place of those that become scarce. Analysts speak of an Age of Substitutability and point, for example, to nanotubes, tiny cylinders of carbon whose molecular structure forms fibers a hundred times as strong as steel, at one sixth the weight. As technologies that use more-abundant resources substitute for those needing less-abundant ones—for example, ceramics in place of tungsten, fiber optics in place of copper wire, aluminum cans in place of tin ones—the demand for and the price of the less-abundant resources decline.

One can easily find earlier instances of substitution. During the early nineteenth century whale oil was the preferred fuel for household illumination. A dwindling supply prompted innovations in the lighting industry, including the invention of gas and kerosene lamps and Edison’s carbon-filament electric bulb. Whale oil has substitutes, such as electricity and petroleum-based lubricants. Whales are irreplaceable.

Third, the more we learn about materials, the more efficiently we use them. The progress from candles to carbon-filament to tungsten incandescent lamps, for example, decreased the energy required for and the cost of a unit of household lighting by many times. Compact fluorescent lights are four times as efficient as today’s incandescent bulbs and last ten to twenty times as long. Comparable energy savings are available in other appliances: for example, refrigerators sold in 1993 were 23 percent more efficient than those sold in 1990 and 65 percent more efficient than those



*UAW team members Michael Proctor,
John Stacy, Kennie Davis and Saturn retailer Doug Axtell.
(Hint, he's the one in the coveralls, extra starch.)*

What if we told you the person who sold you
your car also helped build it?



*Teamwork is not
something we restrict
to the Saturn plant.
It extends out into the
community, as well.
UAW team members
are helping raise money
for Camp Fish Tales,
a barrier-free camp for
kids and adults with
disabilities. You could
help, too, if you want, by
calling 517-797-8800.*



Every so often, a group of Saturn
retailers will come down to
Spring Hill, Tennessee, and
work the assembly line here
at the Saturn plant. Oh, it's
not like we have them build
engines or anti-lock brakes or
anything like that. But they do help put on doors
or install seats or help run wires over in the
cockpit assembly area. And they do work side
by side with the men and women who
build Saturns for a living. It's more an
exercise in team building than it is a lesson in
automobile manufacturing. Although, to be
perfectly honest, after a couple of hours, it can get
pretty hard to tell a retailer from
an autoworker. But then, at
Saturn, that's sort of the point.



THE 1997 SATURN SC2



In the same spirit, Saturn retailers across the country have begun building playgrounds to give inner-city kids a safe and fun place to play. Saturn owners have jumped in there, too. In fact, not too long ago, they all got together and built twelve playgrounds in the New York area in just one weekend. And in the weekends to come? Got a hammer and some free time?

A DIFFERENT KIND of COMPANY. A DIFFERENT KIND of CAR.

This 1997 Saturn SC2 has an M.S.R.P. of \$14,095, including retailer prep and transportation. Of course, the total cost will vary seeing how options are extra, as are things like tax and license. We'd be happy to provide more detail at 1-800-522-5000 or look for us on the Internet at <http://www.saturncars.com>. ©1997 Saturn Corporation.

sold in 1980, saving consumers billions in electric bills.

Amory Lovins, the director of the Rocky Mountain Institute, has described in these pages a new generation of ultralight automobiles that could deliver the safety and muscle of today's cars but with far better mileage—four times as much in prototypes and ten times as much in projected models (see "Reinventing the Wheels," January, 1995, *Atlantic*). Since in today's cars only 15 to 20 percent of the fuel's energy reaches the wheels (the rest is lost in the engine and the transmission), and since materials lighter and stronger than steel are available or on the way, no expert questions the feasibility of the high-mileage vehicles Lovins describes.

Computers and cameras are examples of consumer goods getting lighter and smaller as they get better. The game-maker Sega is marketing a hand-held children's game, called Saturn, that has more computing power than the 1976 Cray supercomputer, which the United States tried to keep out of the hands of the Soviets. Improvements that extend the useful life of objects also save resources. Platinum spark plugs in today's cars last for 100,000 miles, as do "fill-for-life" transmission fluids. On average, cars bought in 1993 have a useful life more than 40 percent longer than those bought in 1970.

As lighter materials replace heavier ones, the U.S. economy continues to shed weight. Our per capita consumption of raw materials such as forestry products and metals has, measured by weight, declined steadily over the past twenty years. A recent World Resources Institute study measured the "materials intensity" of our economy—that is, "the total material input and the hidden or indirect material flows, including deliberate landscape alterations" required for each dollar's worth of economic output. "The result shows a clearly declining pattern of materials intensity, supporting the conclusion that economic activity is growing somewhat more rapidly than natural resource use." Of course, we should do better. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, an association of the world's industrialized nations, has proposed that its members strive as a long-range goal to decrease their materials intensity by a factor of ten.

Communications also illustrates the trend toward lighter, smaller, less materials-intensive technology. Just as telegraph cables replaced frigates in transmitting messages across the Atlantic and carried more information faster, glass fibers and microwaves have replaced cables—each new technology using less materials but providing greater capac-

TAGGING THE STEALER

So much of it I hadn't a bull's notion of
at first, and like the usual ignoramus
who casts his eyes at, say, a Jackson Pollock
or "This Is Just to Say," I scoffed at it.
I didn't twig how it was as close to art
as art itself with its pregame ballyhoo,
antics, rhubarbs, scheming, luck; its look
as if little or nothing is going on.
How often have we waited for the magic
in the hands of some flipper throwing a slider,
sinker, jug-handle, submarine, knuckle, or screwball?
And if we're lucky the slugger hits a daisy cutter
with a choke-up or connects with a Baltimore chop,
instead of batting a fish to slug a pop fly.
And if he really fouls up he swings a rusty gate,
caught with his foot in the bucket,
and a ball hawk catches a can of corn
with a basket catch and the ball rounds the horn.

Oh, look, Davo, how I'm sent sailing
right out of the ball park just by its lingo.
But I swear the most memorable play I witnessed
was with you on our highstools in the Daily Planet
as we slugged the elixirs of our Saturday-night beers.
The Yankees were playing your Toronto Blue Jays.
They were tied at the top of the ninth.
I can't now for the life of me remember
who won, nor the name of the catcher, except
he was an unknown, yet no rookie either.
Suddenly behind the pinch hitter's back he signaled
the pitcher, though no one copped why until seconds later,
as the catcher fireballed the potato to the first baseman,
tagging the stealer. It doesn't sound like much,
but everyone stood up in the house Ruth built,
like hairs on the back of the neck—because the magic
was scary, too. O Jesus, give each of us just once
a poem the equal of that unknown man's talking hand.

—GREG DELANTY

ity for sending and receiving information. Areas not yet wired for telephones (in the former Soviet Union, for example) are expected to leapfrog directly into cellular communications. Robert Solow, a Nobel laureate in economics, says that if the future is like the past, "there will be prolonged and substantial reductions in natural-resource requirements per unit of real output." He asks, "Why shouldn't the productivity of most natural resources rise more or less steadily through time, like the productivity of labor?"

Misconception No. 2: We Are Running Out of Food and Timber

THE United Nations projects that the global population, currently 5.7 billion, will peak at about 10 billion in the next century and then stabilize or even decline. Can the earth feed that many people? Even if food crops increase sufficiently, other renewable resources, including many fisheries and forests, are already under pressure. Should we expect fish stocks to collapse or forests to disappear?

The world already produces enough cereals and oilseeds to feed 10 billion people a vegetarian diet adequate in protein and calories. If, however, the idea is to feed 10 billion people not healthful vegetarian diets but the kind of meat-laden meals that Americans eat, the production of grains and oilseeds may have to triple—primarily to feed livestock. Is anything like this kind of productivity in the cards?

Maybe. From 1961 to 1994 global production of food doubled. Global output of grain rose from about 630 million tons in 1950 to about 1.8 billion tons in 1992, largely as a result of greater yields. Developing countries from 1974 to 1994 increased wheat yields per acre by almost 100 percent, corn yields by 72 percent, and rice yields by 52 percent. "The generation of farmers on the land in 1950 was the first in history to double the production of food," the Worldwatch Institute has reported. "By 1984, they had outstripped population growth enough to raise per capita grain output an unprecedented 40 percent." From a two-year period ending in 1981 to a two-year period ending in 1990 the real prices of basic foods fell 38 percent on world markets, according to a 1992 United Nations report. Prices for food have continually decreased since the end of the eighteenth century, when Thomas Malthus argued that rapid population growth must lead to mass starvation by exceeding the carrying capacity of the earth.

Farmers worldwide could double the acreage in production, but this should not be necessary. Better seeds, more irrigation, multi-cropping, and additional use of fertilizer could greatly increase agricultural yields in the developing world, which are now generally only half those in the industrialized countries. It is biologically possible to raise yields of rice to about seven tons per acre—about four times the current average in the developing world. Super strains of cassava, a pota-

to-like root crop eaten by millions of Africans, promise to increase yields tenfold. American farmers can also do better. In a good year, such as 1994, Iowa corn growers average about 3.5 tons per acre, but farmers more than double that yield in National Corn Growers Association competitions.

In drier parts of the world the scarcity of fresh water presents the greatest challenge to agriculture. But the problem is regional, not global. Fortunately, as Lester Brown, of the Worldwatch Institute, points out, "there are vast opportunities for increasing water efficiency" in arid regions, ranging from installing better water-delivery systems to planting drought-resistant crops. He adds, "Scientists can help push back the physical frontiers of cropping by developing varieties that are more drought resistant, salt tolerant, and early maturing. The payoff on the first two could be particularly high."

As if in response, Novartis Seeds has announced a program to develop water-efficient and salt-tolerant crops, including genetically engineered varieties of wheat. Researchers in Mexico have announced the development of drought-resistant corn that can boost yields by a third. Biotechnologists are converting annual crops into perennial ones, eliminating the need for yearly planting. They also hope to enable cereal crops to fix their own nitrogen, as legumes do, minimizing the need for fertilizer (genetically engineered nitrogen-fixing bacteria have already been test-marketed to farmers). Commercial varieties of crops such as corn, tomatoes, and potatoes which have been genetically engineered to be resistant to pests and diseases have been approved for field testing in the United States; several are now being sold and planted. A new breed of rice, 25 percent more productive than any currently in use, suggests that the Gene Revolution can take over where the Green Revolution left off. Biotechnology, as the historian Paul Kennedy has written, introduces "an entirely new stage in humankind's attempts to produce more crops and plants."

Biotechnology cannot, however, address the major causes of famine: poverty, trade barriers, corruption, mismanagement, ethnic antagonism, anarchy, war, and male-dominated societies that deprive women of food. Local land depletion, itself a consequence of poverty and institutional failure, is also a factor. Those who are too poor to use sound farming practices are compelled to overexploit the resources on which they depend. As the economist Partha Dasgupta has written, "Population growth, poverty and degradation of local resources often fuel one another." The amount of food in world trade is constrained less by the resource base than by the maldistribution of wealth.

Analysts who believe that the world is running out of resources often argue that famines occur not as a result of political or economic conditions but because there are "too many people." Unfortunately, as the economist Amartya Sen has pointed out, public officials who think in Malthusian terms assume that when absolute levels of food supplies are adequate, famine will not occur. This conviction diverts at-



tention from the actual causes of famine, which has occurred in places where food output kept pace with population growth but people were too destitute to buy it.

We would have run out of food long ago had we tried to supply ourselves entirely by hunting and gathering. Likewise, if we depend on nature's gifts, we will exhaust many of the world's important fisheries. Fortunately, we are learning to cultivate fish as we do other crops. Genetic engineers have designed fish for better flavor and color as well as for faster growth, improved disease resistance, and

*Facing page:
Thanksgiving
dinner, Pearland,
Texas; evening meal,
Kouakourou, Mali.
Below: surplus
carrots for cattle
feed, Bakersfield,
California.*

The world already produces enough to feed 10 billion people an adequate vegetarian diet. Biotechnology cannot, however, address the major causes of famine: poverty, trade barriers, corruption, mismanagement, ethnic antagonism, anarchy, and war.



OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: PETER MENZEL; TOP: LYNN JOHNSON, RIGHT: PETER MENZEL

other traits. Two farmed species—silver carp and grass carp—already rank among the ten most-consumed fish worldwide. A specially bred tilapia, known as the “aquatic chicken,” takes six months to grow to a harvestable size of about one and a half pounds.

Aquaculture produced more than 16 million tons of fish in 1993; capacity has expanded over the past decade at an annual rate of 10 percent by quantity and 14 percent by value.

In 1993 fish farms produced 22 percent of all food fish consumed in the world and 90 percent of all oysters sold. The World Bank reports that aquaculture could provide 40 percent of all fish consumed and more than half the value of fish harvested within the next fifteen years.

Salmon ranching and farming provide examples of the growing efficiency of aquacultural production. Norwegian salmon farms alone produce 400 million pounds a year. A biotech firm in Waltham, Massachusetts, has applied for government approval to commercialize salmon genetically engineered to grow four to six times as fast as their naturally occurring cousins. As a 1994 article in *Sierra* magazine noted, “There is so much salmon currently available that the supply exceeds demand, and prices to fishermen have fallen dramatically.”

For those who lament the decline of natural fisheries and the human communities that grew up with them, the successes of aquaculture may offer no consolation. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, overfishing in combination with dams and habitat destruction has reduced the wild salmon population by 80 percent. Wild salmon—but not their bio-engineered aquacultural cousins—contribute to the cultural identity and sense of place of the Northwest. When wild salmon disappear, so will some of the region's history, character, and pride. What is true of wild salmon is also true of whales, dolphins, and other magnificent creatures—as they lose their economic importance, their aesthetic and moral worth becomes all the more evident. Economic considerations pull in one direction, moral considerations in the other. This conflict colors all our battles over the environment.

The transition from hunting and gathering to farming, which is changing the fishing industry, has taken place more slowly in forestry. Still there is no sign of a timber famine. In the United States forests now provide the largest harvests in history, and there is more forested U.S. area today than there was in 1920. Bill McKibben has observed in these pages that the eastern United States, which loggers and farmers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries nearly denuded of trees, has become reforested during this century (see “An Explosion of Green,” April, 1995, *Atlantic*). One reason is that farms reverted to woods. Another is that machinery replaced

animals; each draft animal required two or three cleared acres for pasture.

Natural reforestation is likely to continue as biotechnology makes areas used for logging more productive. According to Roger Sedjo, a respected forestry expert, advances in tree farming, if implemented widely, would permit the world to meet its entire demand for industrial wood using just 200 million acres of plantations—an area equal to only five percent of current forest land. As less land is required for commercial tree production, more natural forests may be protected—as they should be, for aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual reasons.

Often natural resources are so plentiful and therefore inexpensive that they undercut the necessary transition to technological alternatives. If the U.S. government did not protect wild forests from commercial exploitation, the timber industry would have little incentive to invest in tree plantations, where it can multiply yields by a factor of ten and take advantage of the results of genetic research. Only by investing in plantation silviculture can North American forestry fend off price competition from rapidly developing tree plantations in the Southern Hemisphere. Biotechnology-based silviculture can in the near future be expected to underprice “extractive” forestry worldwide. In this decade China will plant about 150 million acres of trees; India now plants four times the area it harvests commercially.

The expansion of fish and tree farming confirms the belief held by Peter Drucker and other management experts that our economy depends far more on the progress of technology than on the exploitation of nature. Although raw materials will always be necessary, knowledge has become the essential factor in the production of goods and services. “Where there is effective management,” Drucker has written, “that is, application of knowledge to knowledge, we can always obtain the other resources.” If we assume, along with Drucker and others, that resource scarcities do not exist or are easily averted, it is hard to see how economic theory, which after all concerns scarcity, provides the conceptual basis for valuing the environment. The reasons to preserve nature are ethical more often than they are economic.

Misconception No. 3: We Are Running Out of Energy

PROBABLY the most persistent worries about resource scarcity concern energy. “The supply of fuels and other natural resources is becoming the limiting factor constraining the rate of economic growth,” a group of experts proclaimed in 1986. They predicted the exhaustion of domestic oil and gas supplies by 2020 and, within a few decades, “major energy shortages as well as food shortages in the world.”

Contrary to these expectations, no global shortages of hy-

drocarbon fuels are in sight. “One sees no immediate danger of ‘running out’ of energy in a global sense,” writes John P. Holdren, a professor of environmental policy at Harvard University. According to Holdren, reserves of oil and natural gas will last seventy to a hundred years if exploited at 1990 rates. (This does not take into account huge deposits of oil shale, heavy oils, and gas from unconventional sources.) He concludes that “running out of energy resources in any global sense is not what the energy problem is all about.”

The global energy problem has less to do with depleting resources than with controlling pollutants. Scientists generally agree that gases, principally carbon dioxide, emitted in the combustion of hydrocarbon fuels can build up in and warm the atmosphere by trapping sunlight. Since carbon dioxide enhances photosynthetic activity, plants to some extent absorb the carbon dioxide we produce. In 1995 researchers reported in *Science* that vegetation in the Northern Hemisphere in 1992 and 1993 converted into trees and other plant tissue 3.5 billion tons of carbon—more than half the carbon produced by the burning of hydrocarbon fuels worldwide.

However successful this and other feedback mechanisms may be in slowing the processes of global warming, a broad scientific consensus, reflected in a 1992 international treaty, has emerged for stabilizing and then decreasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other “greenhouse” gases. This goal is well within the technological reach of the United States and other industrialized countries. Amory Lovins, among others, has described commercially available technologies that can “support present or greatly expanded worldwide economic activity while stabilizing global climate—and saving money.” He observes that “even very large expansions in population and industrial activity need not be energy-constrained.”

Lovins and other environmentalists contend that pollution-free energy from largely untapped sources is available in amounts exceeding our needs. Geothermal energy—which makes use of heat from the earth’s core—is theoretically accessible through drilling technology in the United States in amounts thousands of times as great as the amount of energy contained in domestic coal reserves. Tidal energy is also promising. Analysts who study solar power generally agree with Lester Brown, of the Worldwatch Institute, that

PETER MENZEL





Left: Experimental solar-energy plant, Borega Springs, California.

Below: "Sunracer" in the Australian outback, the GM entry in the trans-continental Pentax solar-car race

The most persistent worries we have about resource scarcity concern energy. But there are vast and largely untapped sources of pollution-free energy available in amounts exceeding even our future needs. Pessimism is not the only option for environmentalists.

"technologies are ready to begin building a world energy system largely powered by solar resources." In the future these and other renewable energy sources may be harnessed to the nation's system of storing and delivering electricity.

Last year Joseph Romm and Charles Curtis described in these pages advances in photovoltaic cells (which convert sunlight into electricity), fuel cells (which convert the hydrogen in fuels directly to electricity and heat, producing virtually no pollution), and wind power ("Mideast Oil Forever?" April, 1996, *Atlantic*). According to these authors, genetically engineered organ-

isms used to ferment organic matter could, with further research and development, bring down the costs of ethanol and other environmentally friendly "biofuels" to make them competitive with gasoline.

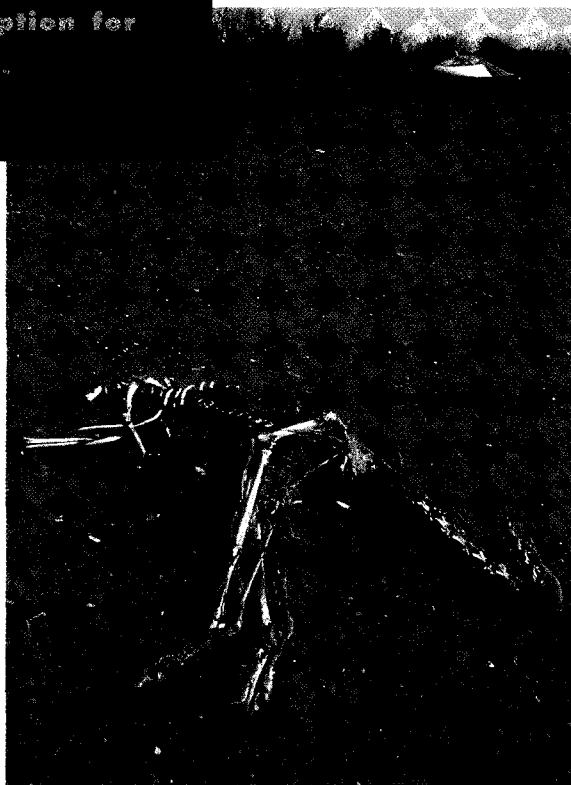
Environmentalists who, like Amory Lovins, believe that our economy can grow and still reduce greenhouse gases emphasize not only that we should be able to move to renewable forms of energy but also that we can use fossil fuels more efficiently. Some improvements are already evident. In developed countries the energy intensity of production—the amount of fuel burned per dollar of economic output—has been decreasing by about two percent a year.

From 1973 to 1986, for example, energy consumption in the United States remained virtually flat while economic production grew by almost 40 percent. Compared with Germany or Japan, this is a poor showing. The Japanese, who tax fuel more heavily than we do, use only half as much energy as the United States per unit of economic output. (Japanese environmental regulations are also generally stricter than ours; if anything, this has improved the competitiveness of Japanese industry.) The United States still wastes hundreds of billions of dollars annually in energy inefficiency. By becoming as energy-efficient as Japan, the United States could

expand its economy and become more competitive internationally.

If so many opportunities exist for saving energy and curtailing pollution, why have we not seized them? One reason is that low fossil-fuel prices remove incentives for fuel efficiency and for converting to other energy sources. Another reason is that government subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear energy amounted to many billions of dollars a year during the 1980s, whereas support for renewables dwindled to \$114 million in 1989, a time when it had been proposed for near elimination. "Lemon socialism," a vast array of subsidies and barriers to trade, protects politically favored technologies,

however inefficient, dangerous, filthy, or obsolete. "At heart, the major obstacles standing in the way [of a renewable-energy economy] are not technical in nature," the energy consul-



PETER MENZEL

tant Michael Brower has written, "but concern the laws, regulations, incentives, public attitudes, and other factors that make up the energy market."

In response to problems of climate change, the World Bank and other international organizations have recognized the importance of transferring advanced energy technologies to the developing world. Plainly, this will take a large investment of capital, particularly in education. Yet the "alternative for developing countries," according to José Goldemberg, a former Environment Minister of Brazil, "would be to remain at a dismally low level of development which . . . would aggravate the problems of sustainability."

Technology transfer can hasten sound economic development worldwide. Many environmentalists, however, argue that economies cannot expand without exceeding the physical limits nature sets—for example, with respect to energy. These environmentalists, who regard increasing affluence as a principal cause of environmental degradation, call for economic retrenchment and retraction—a small economy for a small earth. With Paul Ehrlich, they reject "the hope that development can greatly increase the size of the economic pie and pull many more people out of poverty." This hope is "basically a humane idea," Ehrlich has written, "made insane by the constraints nature places on human activity."

In developing countries, however, a no-growth economy "will deprive entire populations of access to better living conditions and lead to even more deforestation and land degradation," as Goldemberg warns. Moreover, citizens of developed countries are likely to resist an energy policy that they associate with poverty, discomfort, sacrifice, and pain. Technological pessimism, then, may not be the best option for environmentalists. It is certainly not the only one.

Misconception No. 4: The North Exploits the South

WILLIAM Reilly, when he served as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in the Bush Administration, encountered a persistent criticism at international meetings on the environment. "The problem for the world's environment is your consumption, not our population," delegates from the developing world told him. Some of these delegates later took Reilly aside. "The North buys too little from the South," they confided. "The real problem is too little demand for our exports."

The delegates who told Reilly that the North consumes too little of what the South produces have a point. "With a few exceptions (notably petroleum)," a report from the World Resources Institute observes, "most of the natural resources consumed in the United States are from domestic sources." Throughout the 1980s the United States and Canada were the world's leading exporters of raw materials. The United States consistently leads the world in farm exports,

running huge agricultural trade surpluses. The share of raw materials used in the North that it buys from the South stands at a thirty-year low and continues to decline; industrialized nations trade largely among themselves. The World Resources Institute recently reported that "the United States is largely self-sufficient in natural resources." Again, excepting petroleum, bauxite (from which aluminum is made), "and a few other industrial minerals, its material flows are almost entirely internal."

Sugar provides an instructive example of how the North excludes—rather than exploits—the resources of the South. Since 1796 the United States has protected domestic sugar against imports. American sugar growers, in part as a reward for large contributions to political campaigns, have long enjoyed a system of quotas and prohibitive tariffs against foreign competition. American consumers paid about three times world prices for sugar in the 1980s, enriching a small cartel of U.S. growers. *Forbes* magazine has estimated that a single family, the Fanjuls, of Palm Beach, reaps more than \$65 million a year as a result of quotas for sugar.

The sugar industry in Florida, which is larger than that in any other state, makes even less sense environmentally than economically. It depends on a publicly built system of canals, levees, and pumping stations. Fertilizer from the sugarcane fields chokes the Everglades. Sugar growers, under a special exemption from labor laws, import Caribbean laborers to do the grueling and poorly paid work of cutting cane.

As the United States tightened sugar quotas (imports fell from 6.2 to 1.5 million tons annually from 1977 to 1987), the Dominican Republic and other nations with climates ideal for growing cane experienced political turmoil and economic collapse. Many farmers in Latin America, however, did well by switching from sugar to coca, which is processed into cocaine—perhaps the only high-value imported crop for which the United States is not developing a domestic substitute.

Before the Second World War the United States bought 40 percent of its vegetable oils from developing countries. After the war the United States protected its oilseed markets—for example, by establishing price supports for soybeans. Today the United States is one of the world's leading exporters of oil and oilseeds, although it still imports palm and coconut oils to obtain laurate, an ingredient in soap, shampoo, and detergents. Even this form of "exploitation" will soon cease. In 1994 farmers in Georgia planted the first commercial acreage of a high-laurate canola, genetically engineered by Calgene, a biotechnology firm.

About 100,000 Kenyans make a living on small plots of land growing pyrethrum flowers, the source of a comparatively environmentally safe insecticide of which the United States has been the largest importer. The U.S. Department of Commerce, however, awarded \$1.2 million to a biotechnology firm to engineer pyrethrum genetically. Industrial

countries will soon be able to synthesize all the pyrethrum they need and undersell Kenyan farmers.

An article in *Foreign Policy* in December of 1995 observed that the biotechnological innovations that create “substitutes for everything from vanilla to cocoa and coffee threaten to eliminate the livelihood of millions of Third World agricultural workers.” Vanilla cultured in laboratories costs a fifth as much as vanilla extracted from beans, and thus jeopardizes the livelihood of tens of thousands of vanilla farmers in Madagascar. In the past, farms produced agricultural commodities and factories processed them. In the future, factories may “grow” as well as process many of the most valuable commodities—or the two functions will become one. As one plant scientist has said, “We have to stop thinking of these things as plant cells, and start thinking of them as new microorganisms, with all the potential that implies”—meaning, for instance, that the cells could be made to grow in commercially feasible quantities in laboratories, not fields.

The North not only balks at buying sugar and other crops from developing countries; it also dumps its excess agricultural commodities, especially grain, on them. After the Second World War, American farmers, using price supports left over from the New Deal, produced vast wheat surpluses, which the United States exported at concessionary prices to Europe and then the Third World. These enormous transfers of cereals to the South, institutionalized during the 1950s and 1960s by U.S. food aid, continued during the 1970s and 1980s, as the United States and the European Community vied for markets, each outdoing the other in subsidizing agricultural exports.

Grain imports from the United States “created food dependence within two decades in countries which had been mostly self-sufficient in food at the end of World War II,” the sociologist Harriet Friedmann has written. Tropical countries soon matched the grain gluts of the North with their own surpluses of cocoa, coffee, tea, bananas, and other export commodities. Accordingly, prices for these commodities collapsed as early as 1970, catching developing nations in a scissors. As Friedmann describes it, “One blade was food import dependency. The other blade was declining revenues for traditional exports of tropical crops.”

It might be better for the environment if the North exchanged the crops for which it is ecologically suited—wheat, for example—for crops easily grown in the South, such as coffee, cocoa, palm oil, and tea. Contrary to common belief, these tropical export crops—which grow on trees and bushes, providing canopy and continuous root structures to protect the soil—are less damaging to the soil than are traditional staples such as cereals and root crops. Better markets for tropical crops could help developing nations to employ their rural populations and to protect their natural resources. Allen Hammond, of the World Resources Institute, points out that “if poor nations cannot export anything else, they will export

their misery—in the form of drugs, diseases, terrorism, migration, and environmental degradation.”

Peasants in less-developed nations often confront intractable poverty, an entrenched land-tenure system, and a lack of infrastructure; they have little access to markets, education, or employment. Many of the rural poor, according to the environmental consultant Norman Myers, “have no option but to over-exploit environmental resource stocks in order to survive”—for example, by “increasingly encroaching onto tropical forests among other low-potential lands.” These poorest of the poor “are causing as much natural-resource depletion as the other three billion developing-world people put together.”

Myers observes that traditional indigenous farmers in tropical forests moved from place to place without seriously damaging the ecosystem. The principal agents of tropical deforestation are refugees from civil war and rural poverty, who are forced to eke out a living on marginal lands. Activities such as road building, logging, and commercial agriculture have barely increased in tropical forests since the early 1980s, according to Myers; slash-and-burn farming by displaced peasants accounts for far more deforestation—roughly three fifths of the total. Its impact is fast expanding. Most of the wood from trees harvested in tropical forests—that is, those not cleared for farms—is used locally for fuel. The likeliest path to protecting the rain forest is through economic development that enables peasants to farm efficiently, on land better suited to farming than to forest.

Many have argued that economic activity, affluence, and growth automatically lead to resource depletion, environmental deterioration, and ecological collapse. Yet greater productivity and prosperity—which is what economists mean by growth—have become prerequisite for controlling urban pollution and protecting sensitive ecological systems such as rain forests. Otherwise, destitute people who are unable to acquire food and fuel will create pollution and destroy forests. Without economic growth, which also correlates with lower fertility, the environmental and population problems of the South will only get worse. For impoverished countries facing environmental disaster, economic growth may be the one thing that is sustainable.

What Is Wrong With Consumption?

MANY of us who attended college in the 1960s and 1970s took pride in how little we owned. We celebrated our freedom when we could fit all our possessions—mostly a stereo—into the back of a Beetle. Decades later, middle-aged and middle-class, many of us have accumulated an appalling amount of stuff. Piled high with gas grills, lawn mowers, excess furniture, bicycles, children’s toys, garden implements, lumber, cinder blocks, ladders, lawn

and leaf bags stuffed with memorabilia, and boxes yet to be unpacked from the last move, the two-car garages beside our suburban homes are too full to accommodate the family minivan. The quantity of resources, particularly energy, we waste and the quantity of trash we throw away (recycling somewhat eases our conscience) add to our consternation.

Even if predictions of resource depletion and ecological collapse are mistaken, it seems that they *should* be true, to punish us for our sins. We are distressed by the suffering of others, the erosion of the ties of community, family, and friendship, and the loss of the beauty and spontaneity of the natural world. These concerns reflect the most traditional and fundamental of American religious and cultural values.

Simple compassion instructs us to give to relieve the misery of others. There is a lot of misery worldwide to relieve. But as bad as the situation is, it is improving. In 1960 nearly 70 percent of the people in the world lived at or below the subsistence level. Today less than a third do, and the number enjoying fairly satisfactory conditions (as measured by the United Nations Human Development Index) rose from 25 percent in 1960 to 60 percent in 1992. Over the twenty-five years before 1992 average per capita consumption in developing countries increased 75 percent in real terms. The pace of improvements is also increasing. In developing countries in that period, for example, power generation and the number of telephone lines per capita doubled, while the number of households with access to clean water grew by half.

What is worsening is the discrepancy in income between the wealthy and the poor. Although world income measured in real terms has increased by 700 percent since the Second World War, the wealthiest people have absorbed most of the gains. Since 1960 the richest fifth of the world's people have seen their share of the world's income increase from 70 to 85 percent. Thus one fifth of the world's population possesses much more than four fifths of the world's wealth, while the share held by all others has correspondingly fallen; that of the world's poorest 20 percent has declined from 2.3 to 1.4 percent.

Writing in these pages, Benjamin Barber ("Jihad vs. McWorld," March, 1992, *Atlantic*) described market forces that "mesmerize the world with fast music, fast computers, and fast food—with MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald's, pressing nations into one commercially homogeneous global network: one McWorld tied together by technology, ecology, communications, and commerce." Affluent citizens of South Korea, Thailand, India, Brazil, Mexico, and many other rapidly developing nations have joined with Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and others to form an urban and cosmopolitan international society. Those who participate in this global network are less and less beholden to local customs and traditions. Meanwhile, ethnic, tribal, and other cultural groups that do not dissolve into McWorld often define

themselves in opposition to it—fiercely asserting their ethnic, religious, and territorial identities.

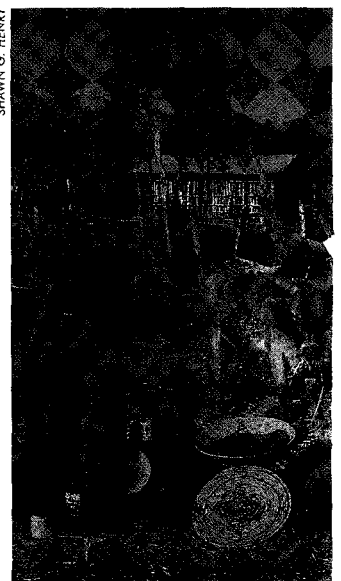
The imposition of a market economy on traditional cultures in the name of development—for example, the insistence that everyone produce and consume more—can dissolve the ties to family, land, community, and place on which indigenous peoples traditionally rely for their security. Thus development projects intended to relieve the poverty of indigenous peoples may, by causing the loss of cultural identity, engender the very powerlessness they aim to remedy. Pope Paul VI, in the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967), described the tragic dilemma confronting indigenous peoples: "either to preserve traditional beliefs and structures and reject social progress; or to embrace foreign technology and foreign culture, and reject ancestral traditions with their wealth of humanism."

The idea that everything is for sale and nothing is sacred—that all values are subjective—undercuts our own moral and cultural commitments, not just those of tribal and traditional communities. No one has written a better critique of the assault that commerce makes on the quality of our lives than Thoreau provides in *Walden*. The cost of a thing, according to Thoreau, is not what the market will bear but what the individual must bear because of it: it is "the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run."

Many observers point out that as we work harder and consume more, we seem to enjoy our lives less. We are always in a rush—a "Saint Vitus' dance," as Thoreau called it. Idleness is suspect. Americans today spend less time with their families, neighbors, and friends than they did in the 1950s. Juliet B. Schor, an economist at Harvard University, argues that "Americans are literally working themselves to death." A fancy car, video equipment, or a complex computer program can exact a painful cost in the form of maintenance, upgrading, and repair. We are possessed by our possessions; they are often harder to get rid of than to acquire.

That money does not make us happier, once our basic needs are met, is a commonplace overwhelmingly confirmed by sociological evidence. Paul Wachtel, who teaches social psychology at the City University of New York, has con-

SHAWN G. HENRY



cluded that bigger incomes “do not yield an increase in feelings of satisfaction or well-being, at least for populations who are above a poverty or subsistence level.” This cannot be explained simply by the fact that people have to work harder to earn more money: even those who hit jackpots in lotteries often report that their lives are not substantially happier as a result. Well-being depends upon health, membership in a community in which one feels secure, friends, faith, family, love, and virtues that money cannot buy. Robert Lane, a political scientist at Yale University, using the concepts of economics, has written, “If ‘utility’ has anything to do with happiness, above the poverty line the long-term marginal utility of money is almost zero.”

Economists in earlier times predicted that

wealth would not matter to people once they attained a comfortable standard of living. “In ease of body and peace of mind, all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level,” wrote Adam Smith, the eighteenth-century English advocate of the free market. In the 1930s the British economist John Maynard Keynes argued that after a period of great expansion further accumulation of wealth would no longer improve personal well-being. Subsequent economists, however, found that even after much of the indus-



The world has the wealth and resources to provide everyone with a decent life. We consume too much when market relationships displace the bonds of community, compassion, culture, and place—when consumption becomes an end in itself.

trial world had attained the levels of wealth Keynes thought were sufficient, people still wanted more. From this they inferred that wants are insatiable.

Perhaps this is true. But the insatiability of wants and desires poses a difficulty for standard economic theory, which posits that humanity’s single goal is to increase or maximize wealth. If wants increase as fast as income grows, what purpose can wealth serve?

Critics often attack standard economic theory on the ground that economic growth is “unsustainable.” We are running out of resources, they say; we court ecological disaster. Whether or not growth is sustainable, there is little reason to think that once people attain a decent standard of living, continued growth is desirable. The economist Robert H. Nelson recently wrote in the journal *Ecological Economics* that it is no longer possible for most people to believe that economic progress will “solve all the problems of mankind, spiritual as well as material.” As long as the debate over sustainability is framed in terms of the physical limits to growth rather than the moral purpose of it, mainstream economic theory will have the better of the argument. If the debate were framed in moral or social terms, the result might well be otherwise.

Households and their possessions:
left, the Geto family,
Moulo Village,
Ethiopia; above, the
Hodson family,
Godalming, England

Making a Place for Nature

ACCORDING to Thoreau, "a man's relation to Nature must come very near to a personal one." For environmentalists in the tradition of Thoreau and John Muir, stewardship is a form of fellowship; although we must use nature, we do not value it primarily for the economic purposes it serves. We take our bearings from the natural world—our sense of time from its days and seasons, our sense of place from the character of a landscape and the particular plants and animals native to it. An intimacy with nature ends our isolation in the world. We know where we belong, and we can find the way home.

In defending old-growth forests, wetlands, or species we make our best arguments when we think of nature chiefly in aesthetic and moral terms. Rather than having the courage of our moral and cultural convictions, however, we too often rely on economic arguments for protecting nature, in the process attributing to natural objects more instrumental value than they have. By claiming that a threatened species may harbor lifesaving drugs, for example, we impute to that species an economic value or a price much greater than it fetches in a market. When we make the prices come out right, we rescue economic theory but not necessarily the environment.

There is no credible argument, moreover, that all or even most of the species we are concerned to protect are essential to the functioning of the ecological systems on which we depend. (If whales went extinct, for example, the seas would not fill up with krill.) David Ehrenfeld, a biologist at Rutgers University, makes this point in relation to the vast ecological changes we have already survived. "Even a mighty dominant like the American chestnut," Ehrenfeld has written, "extending over half a continent, all but disappeared without bringing the eastern deciduous forest down with it." Ehrenfeld points out that the species most likely to be endangered are those the biosphere is least likely to miss. "Many of these species were never common or ecologically influential; by no stretch of the imagination can we make them out to be vital cogs in the ecological machine."

Species may be profoundly important for cultural and spiritual reasons, however. Consider again the example of the wild salmon, whose habitat is being destroyed by hydroelectric dams along the Columbia River. Although this loss is unimportant to the economy overall (there is no shortage of salmon), it is of the greatest significance to the Amerindian tribes that have traditionally subsisted on wild salmon, and to the region as a whole. By viewing local flo-

ra and fauna as a sacred heritage—by recognizing their intrinsic value—we discover who we are rather than what we want. On moral and cultural grounds society might be justified in making great economic sacrifices—removing hydroelectric dams, for example—to protect remnant populations of the Snake River sockeye, even if, as critics complain, hundreds or thousands of dollars are spent for every fish that is saved.

Even those plants and animals that do not define places possess enormous intrinsic value and are worth preserving for their own sake. What gives these creatures value lies in their histories, wonderful in themselves, rather than in any use to which they can be put. The biologist E. O. Wilson elegantly takes up this theme: "Every kind of organism has reached this moment in time by threading one needle after another, throwing up brilliant artifices to survive and reproduce against nearly impossible odds." Every plant or animal evokes not just sympathy but also reverence and wonder in those who know it.

In *Earth in the Balance* (1992) Al Gore, then a senator, wrote, "We have become so successful at controlling nature that we have lost our connection to it." It is all too easy, Gore wrote, "to regard the earth as a collection of 'resources' having an intrinsic value no larger than their usefulness at the moment." The question before us is not whether we are going to run out of resources. It is whether economics is the appropriate context for thinking about environmental policy.

Even John Stuart Mill, one of the principal authors of utilitarian philosophy, recognized that the natural world has great intrinsic and not just instrumental value. More than a century ago, as England lost its last truly wild places, Mill condemned a world

with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature; with every rood of land brought into cultivation, which is capable of growing food for human beings; every flowery waste or natural pasture ploughed up; all quadrupeds or birds which are not domesticated for man's use exterminated as his rivals for food, every hedgerow or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a wild shrub or flower could grow without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture.

The world has the wealth and the resources to provide everyone the opportunity to live a decent life. We consume too much when market relationships displace the bonds of community, compassion, culture, and place. We consume too much when consumption becomes an end in itself and makes us lose affection and reverence for the natural world. ☙

The photographs that appear on pages 80–81 (bottom), 82–83 (top), 88, and 94–95 were commissioned for the book

Material World: A Global Family Portrait, by Peter Menzel, published by Sierra Club Books.

UNANSWERED

PRAYERS

KISS

This charm is green in the red world.
Low leaf that opens anyway
among dry shells, by a hard road.
In the chained world, this charm is free.

A private charm against good-byes
when you and I release each other—
this kiss we give, these orphan cries
we swallow, this turning to a feather.

I kiss your mouth, you kiss me back:
this charm's a statement and reply—
and a seed, a wedge, a way to take
some change into our work today.

This kiss is hidden in the border of night.
Leaf that is ours, love that is green,
give us all more life, more sweet
hours and days together again.

—REGINALD GIBBONS

PRAYER

Lord, I call to you—
there is someone
I want you to follow home.
The night is cold.
The wet leaves hide the edges
of the dark path. He
is lost. I would
go with him if I could,
put my arms around him,
share my coat. He is
three hundred miles
away. No one else

sees him. Do you
see him, his step hurried
through the black rain?
Or are you
still busy, as you were when,
before he harmed himself
the last time, he was the one
who called?

—PATRICIA HOOPER



PSALM

Lord of dimensions and the dimensionless,
Wave and particle, all and none,

Who lets us measure the wounded atom,
Who lets us doubt all measurement,

When in this world we betray you
Let us be faithful in another.

—MARK JARMAN

LEARNING HOW TO PRAY

When I heard my brother
was dying youngest
of the six of us our
lovely boy I who in matters
of the spirit
had been always suspect
who even as a child
snubbed Mama's
mealtime ritual
began finally to
pray and fearing
I would offend
or miss completely
the rightful target of my pleas
went knocking everywhere
the Buddha's huge
and starry churning Shiva
Vishnu Isis the worn
and ragged god of Ishmael
I bowed to the Druid reverence
of trees to water fire
and wind prayed to weather
to carbon that sole link
to all things
this and other worldly
our carbon who art in heaven
prayed to rake and plow
the sweet acid stench of dung
to fly to the fly's soiled
wing and to the soil

I could not stop
myself I like a nymphomaniac
the dark promiscuity
of my spirit there
for the taking whore
of my breaking heart willing
to lie down with anything.

—CATHY SMITH BOWERS



Under the dust a flake of consciousness,
a word, a condensation frozen on the breath,
is falling fallen windblown whirling;
Krishna on the white flake of the lotus
in the arms of Lakshmi, hands divine
inside each other's shirt. And all around them
wheels of heaven crash into the silent
windows of Bird Library past midnight,
Bird of the Dead Tongues, mine, my logy
snowbird Ba in snow. I should be home.
My daughters my twin girls say Ba for bird
for book for bottle—Ba: in Egypt,
bird with a human head, the soul.
They wake, and wake their mother. Ba!
They point into the dark. Ba, Ba! they say,
and back to nursing weary in her arms.

—BROOKS HAXTON

NOT MY LEG

Not my leg,
My lean, strong leg.
Choose any other part,
But please don't start
With my lovely leg.
I'd look bad with a peg.

Not my hand,
My articulate hand.
Please don't let it
Get torn or shredded.
Writing this book
Would be hard with a hook—
You must understand
I need my hand.

Not my eyes,
Dear God, not my eyes.
Don't poke them out
So I grope about
Like Homer, Milton, Joyce.
If you have to be blind
To have such a voice,
I find
I want my eyes.

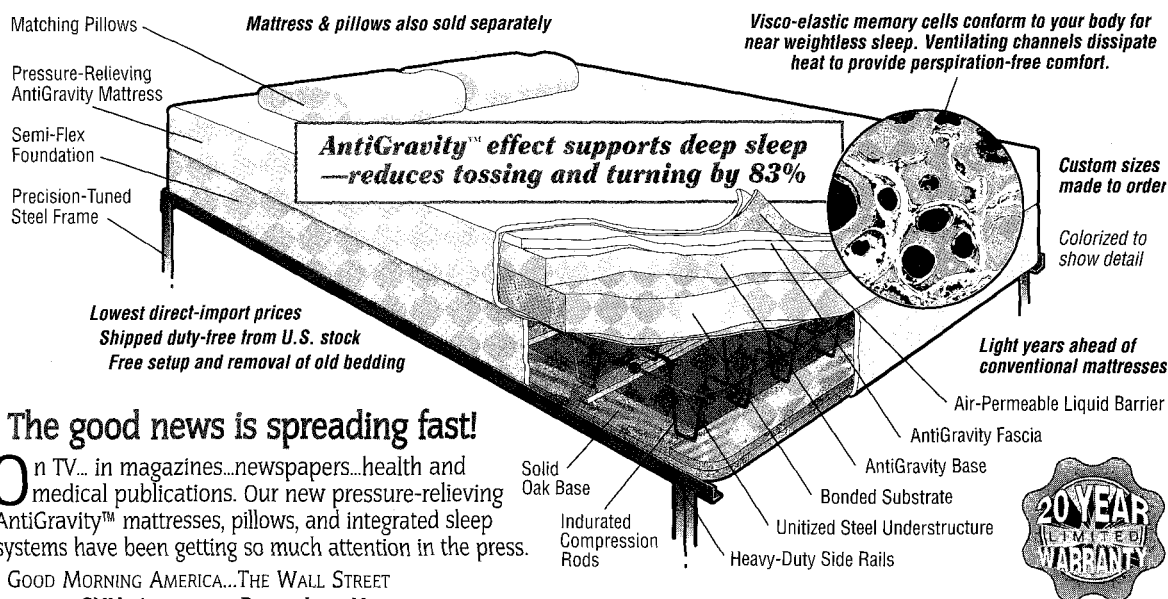
Not the urethra, not the anus,
The avenues that meekly drain us.
At least if they block, or get infected,
Please let it be quickly detected,
So a minimum of me gets cut.
Leave them alone,
My necessary thrones
Of pleasure and smut.

Not my body, my only body.
I know that the construction's shoddy,
Not built to last—
Someday it will lie in the past—
Still, I cannot restrain myself
From praying for my own good health,
Which some denying part of me
Believes should last eternally,
Although that only could hold true
For something out of nature's view,
And not my body, not my body.

—DAVID J. ROTHMAN

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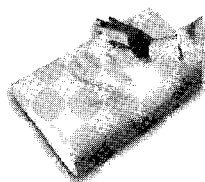


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—Bob Trussell
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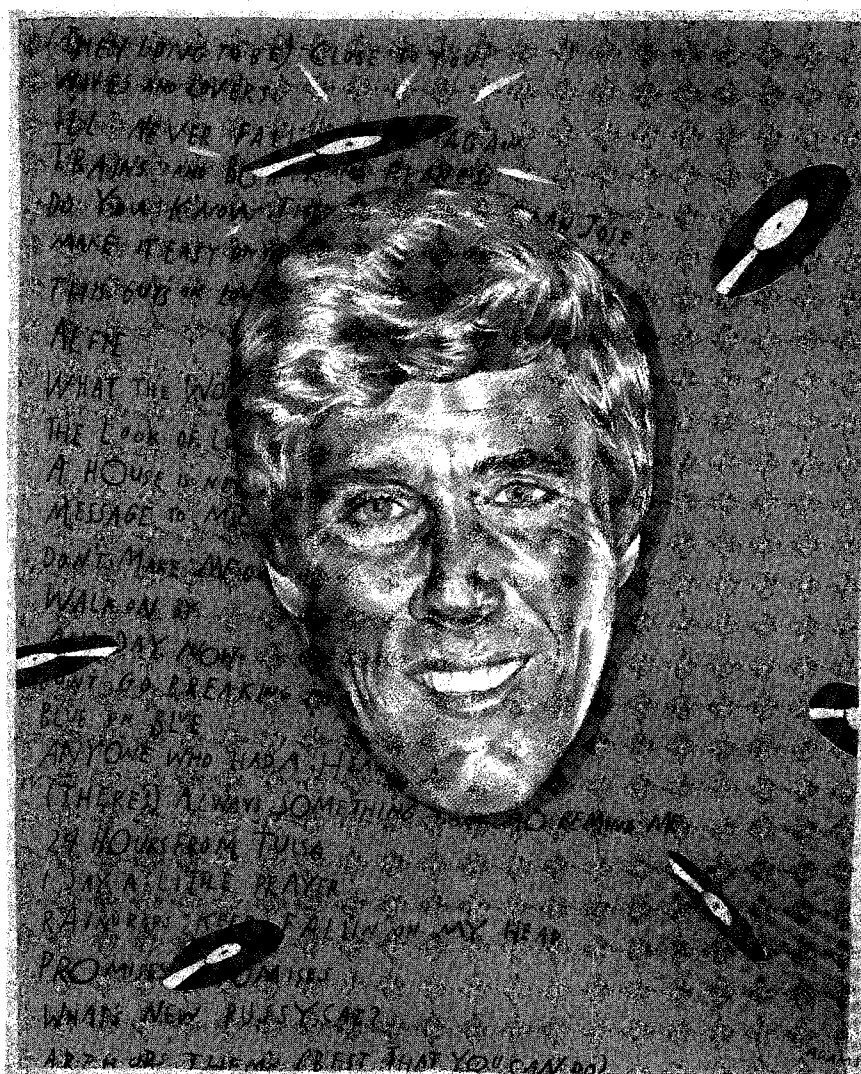
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The Man From Heaven

*The songs of Burt Bacharach are enjoying
a revival that seems unlikely only
at first hearing*

BURT Bacharach, the composer with the lyricist Hal David of "The Look of Love," "(They Long to Be) Close to You," and "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," was once the subject of an article in an academic quarterly, though the larger social significance of those and his other pop hits of the sixties and early

seventies would seem to be nil. Almost two years after Bacharach won a pair of Oscars for his work on the movie *Butch*

Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, one for best original score and

the other for "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head," Bruce A. Lohof's "The Bacharach Phenomenon: A Study in Popular Heroism" appeared in the Win-

ter, 1972, issue of *Popular Music and Society*, a journal published at Bowling Green State University. Lohof discussed Bacharach's music in some detail, acknowledging its melodic sophistication and metrical complexity, but what most interested him was Bacharach's emergence as a "national idol"—a celebrity songwriter who was to his day what Stephen Foster, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Cole Porter had been to theirs.

According to Lohof, Bacharach met several of the criteria of popular (as opposed to classical) heroism that had been outlined by a sociologist named Orrin E. Klapp some twenty years earlier. Bacharach's two Oscars, along with a pair of 1970 Grammys, qualified as "formal recognition and honor." As for "the building up of an idealized image or legend of the hero," two television specials devoted to Bacharach and a series of best-selling albums that featured him conducting orchestral versions of his hits had gained for him a degree of visibility almost unheard of for a songwriter not primarily identified as a singer. He had even appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*. And though Lohof discreetly downplayed the point, it didn't hurt that Bacharach was married to the actress Angie Dickinson, a thinking man's trophy blonde who had been John Wayne's love interest in *Rio Bravo*, Frank Sinatra's in *Ocean's Eleven*, and, according to rumor, one of John F. Kennedy's in real life.

Lohof's thesis appeared to be that a modern-day hero like Bacharach, as much image as flesh and blood, was made of flimsier stuff than the mythological heroes of antiquity. On what seems to have been intended as a lighter note, the author observed that Bacharach's "total" heroism—his fulfillment of Klapp's final two criteria, "commemoration" and "established cult"—might depend on his death in an automobile accident or a plane crash.

Yet a quarter century later, after dying only in the metaphorical, show-business sense—nothing new on the pop charts for a seven-year stretch beginning in 1974, and then nothing new on them since Patti LaBelle and Michael McDonald's No. 1 recording of "On My Own," in 1986—

by Francis Davis

Bacharach has seen his name become synonymous with the craft of songwriting at its most elegant and imperiled. He is a cultural signifier—far more meaningful than being the face on a posthumous postage stamp. Just as John Coltrane's name is dropped by black essayists and novelists to signify artistic commitment and racial pride, Bacharach's is pressed into service by pop-record reviewers to commend groups that at least recognize the value of good songs, even if they haven't figured out how to write any yet.

BACHARACH and David's hits, because they were pop rather than rock, were anomalies in their own day—bridges across the generational divide, built by men born in the 1920s, whose musical sensibilities were formed before the onslaught of rock-and-roll. While competing for a rung on the Top 40 with Lennon and McCartney and with the Motown songwriting and producing team of Holland-Dozier-Holland, Bacharach and David were also competing for movie assignments with older writers such as Dimitri Tiomkin, Johnny Mercer, and Jimmy Van Heusen. ("Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" was Bacharach and David's fourth song to be nominated for an Oscar, following their title songs for *What's New Pussycat?* and *Alfie* and "The Look of Love," from *Casino Royale*.)

Bacharach and David were also, however fleetingly, men of the theater. On her 1995 album *The Story Goes On*, the cabaret singer Liz Callaway includes a medley of "Promises, Promises" and "Knowing When to Leave," from Bacharach and David's only Broadway score (*Promises, Promises*), alongside songs from *Annie Get Your Gun*, *South Pacific*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*. The two Bacharach and David songs seem out of place in this company only because Callaway, with the overearnestness typical of so many younger cabaret performers, sounds as if she's mentally counting beats on them. Her rendition of "Promises, Promises"—a song that starts off in a 3/4 time too fast and diabolically synopated to be called a waltz and then changes meter twenty times, often after just one bar—makes one yearn for Dionne Warwick, Bacharach and David's premier interpreter. On her hit 1968 recording of the song Warwick refused to

be thrown by any of this rhythmic trickery, let alone by the many notes she was required to hold for a measure while the chords and instrumentation behind her shifted along with the rhythm.

Warwick appeared with Bacharach on cable television last New Year's Eve. American Movie Classics promoted their gala concert at the Rainbow Room (which had been taped several weeks earlier) as an attempt to restore "elegance" and "glamour" to a New York New Year's Eve—that is, as an alternative to Dick Clark and rock-and-roll in Times Square. Thus Bacharach was positioned as the new Guy Lombardo.

Yet Bacharach, in the language of marketing demographics, also "skews" young, and this is what I find surprising—that with no apparent effort on his part he has become a figure of cult adulation among the young. A tip-off that Bacharach was again becoming at least a mini-phenomenon was the color poster of him as he looked thirty years ago, plainly visible on the lower left-hand corner of the booklet for *Definitely Maybe* (1994), the first CD by Oasis, a British group that has since become a favorite on college and alternative-rock stations. Noel Gallagher, the group's primary songwriter and lead guitarist, joined Bacharach on stage to sing "This Guy's in Love With You" during one of Bacharach's concerts in London last year.

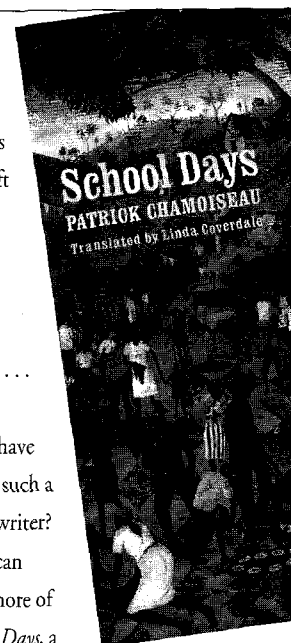
Gallagher's own songs sound nothing like those of his reputed idol: they have too much guitar, and too much adolescent snarl. But his admiration for Bacharach seems genuine, in contrast to that of those younger musicians whose admiration for Bacharach takes the form of a postmodern smirk. Rumor has it that Green Day will record a version of "Do You Know the Way to San Jose" for a Hollywood Records collection called *Loungapalooza*, and no one will be surprised if the thunderous grunge band gives this catchiest of Bacharach's numbers a nose ring and a few unsightly tattoos.

Not all new bands are having sly fun. The most awkwardly sincere of recent tributes to Bacharach, and also the most ambitious, is *Great Jewish Music: Burt Bacharach*, a two-disc set produced by the avant-garde composer John Zorn for his own label, Tzadik Records, on which instrumentalists and singers from Zorn's

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inner circle of noisemakers and deconstructionists give what perhaps only they would consider to be reasonably faithful interpretations of Bacharach classics. "More than great pop songs," Zorn writes in his liner notes, "[these songs] are deep explorations of the materials of music and should be studied and treasured with as much care and diligence as we accord any great work of art." He might have added that it seems the peculiar fate of major artists to attract disciples they would be hard put to recognize as theirs.

THE title *Great Jewish Music* tells us more about Zorn, who now gives interviews only to the Jewish press, than it does about Bacharach, who has never made an issue of his religion or ethnicity. Still, the title serves to remind us that songwriting was a quick way up the ladder for the Jewish songwriters of Irving Berlin's generation—Eastern European immigrants and their sons. Popular songwriting in the first few decades of this century was as much a business as an art, often dependent less on inspiration than on salesmanship. Berlin, if asked the secret of his success as he made the rounds of publishers along Tin Pan Alley in the early years of the century, might have given the same reply as a man in dry goods or the rag trade: "Volume!" The true secret was writing all manner of songs and peddling them to all manner of singers, in the hope that a few tunes would capture the public's fancy.

Berlin wrote more great songs than any other American, but he also wrote hundreds that no one remembers. Bacharach and David, too, wrote their share of forgotten songs, beginning with two that actually made the Top 40 in 1957 and 1958 ("Magic Moments," recorded by Perry Como, and "The Story of My Life," recorded by the country singer Marty Robbins). Whatever else had changed about the music business, songwriting was still a hustle. Writers were the first workers on an assembly line that included music publishers, independent record producers, record-company directors of artists and repertoire, arrangers, singers, promotion men, and disc jockeys. Singers were considered interchangeable during this period, and so were songwriters. This system of making music hardly encouraged experimentation or originality, but it somehow produced a steady stream

of songs that still sound great when you hear them on the radio.

Common wisdom has it that nothing of lasting value happened in pop between Elvis Presley's induction into the Army in 1958 and the Beatles' arrival in the United States in 1964. In conspiracy with other manic rockabilly and renegade rhythm-and-blues acts such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry, Presley is supposed to have "blackened" pop—to have loosened both its beat and its restraints, giving voice to rude emotions that pop had never before been allowed to express. A few years later, the story goes, the Beatles and Bob Dylan came along and shut down the assembly line once and for all, reshaping pop into a vehicle for self-expression by performing their own songs. The period in between is supposed to have been dominated by innocuous pop idols mouthing (to the best of their limited abilities) words and melodies provided by hacks whose only incentive was a fat royalty check.

Of course, this isn't the way it seemed if, like me, you were a teenager with an ear glued to a transistor radio. Nor is it the way that pop of the early sixties sounds to me now, as a middle-aged adult. It isn't nostalgia that makes me think of the Shirelles' 1960 recording of Gerry Goffin and Carole King's "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" as a great record. It could be the way the song combines the identities of the young white woman who co-wrote it, the young black women who sang it, and that era's teenage girls, who fretted over the consequences of surrendering their virginity and for whom "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" became a sort of anthem.

During the first several years of their partnership Bacharach and David each continued to work with other collaborators, aiming songs at both the adult and the teen market with occasional commercial success but little artistic distinction. They seemed an unlikely bet to surpass not just Goffin and King but Lennon and McCartney, to be the leading songwriting team of their era. The song that is usually pointed to as their breakthrough is "Don't Make Me Over," the first of their numbers to be recorded by Dionne Warwick, in 1962. To that day's teenagers it was simply another "slow" song: a dreamy record of the sort that a TV dance-show host might designate a

ladies' choice. In retrospect it seems one of the most innovative songs of the early sixties, if only for the way its meter fluctuates between 12/8 and 6/8 (each an uncommon time signature in pop) and for the way Bacharach's orchestration spaces Warwick and the background singers so far apart. It was followed the next year by "Anyone Who Had a Heart," an erotic chant with passages in 5/4 (a signature only then becoming popular in jazz, as a result of its use by Dave Brubeck and Paul Desmond), and the majestic "Walk on By," with its driving wood blocks, flügelhorns, and strings. These proved to be the earliest in a long string of hit recordings by Warwick of Bacharach and David songs which lasted into 1970, spanning what are usually defined as two eras of pop.

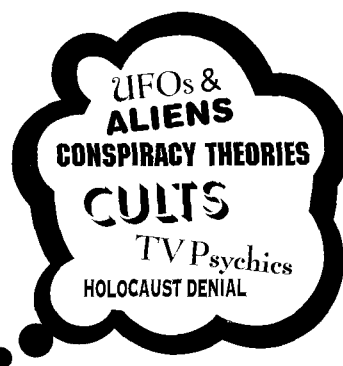
Warwick has since become a figure of fun, because of her infomercials for the Psychic Friends Network. As singers frequently do when age robs them of breath and plays havoc with their pitch, she cheated quite a bit in the Rainbow Room show with Bacharach. For example, she changed the legato connecting phrase she sang to such thrilling effect on her recording of "Do You Know the Way to San Jose"—the *oooh* before "L.A. is a great big freeway"—into a bumpy *A-oh, A-oh*; she didn't even chance "Promises, Promises." In her prime, though, Warwick was Aretha Franklin's only rival as the finest female pop singer of the 1960s, and she surpassed Franklin in versatility. Atypically for singers of the time, Warwick was a trained musician—a music student who was part of a gospel group that was doing studio backup vocals when Bacharach and David happened upon her. She sounded as though she could sing anything put in front of her, and when Bacharach started writing for her, he began sprinkling his melodies with accidentals and descending intervals greater than a fifth.

Bacharach and David never worked exclusively with Warwick, and the series of hits they wrote for Gene Pitney in the early sixties demonstrates the ingenuity they brought to assignments that might just as easily have resulted in confecti-
onary ballads and corny novelty tunes. The Bacharach and David song for Pitney that most people are likely to remember is "Only Love Can Break a Heart," a

tearjerker in keeping with Pitney's image as the most sensitive of the day's male pinups—the one in whose voice the ache seemed most genuine. A song more worth remembering is the follow-up: "True Love Never Runs Smooth," a full-blown chanson disguised as a cha-cha, with what sounds like an accordion and a zither (but could be a concertina and a bouzouki) lending an exotic air to the instrumentation. The title song from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* may have represented an attempt by Pitney's managers to put some hair on his chest. Instead of dashing off a vague cow-poke narrative in the tradition of the famous theme from *High Noon*—all that was really called for—David encapsulated practically the entire movie in his lyric. Bacharach matched him in ambition, juxtaposing a country fiddler against a full string section and using rhythms evocative of square dances and horse clops to capture more than the required hint of the Old West.

"Twenty Four Hours From Tulsa," my choice as Bacharach and David's masterpiece for Pitney, was meant to give the singer another hit in the same vein. This time, in the absence of an actual movie, David had to invent a plot—a southwestern noir about a man who succumbs to the charms of a beautiful stranger on his way home to his sweetheart. Bacharach's double-timed, out-of-phase mariachi trumpets give the song its nightmarish momentum: we half expect the singer and his new flame to go on a killing spree south of the border after the final diminuendo.

THE variety of Bacharach's songs just for Pitney should indicate that there is no such thing as a typical Bacharach song, despite the composer's many identifiable melodic traits. Bacharach has probably written more songs in triple meter than any other popular songwriter since Berlin: "What's New Pussycat?" is a waltz, and so is "What the World Needs Now Is Love." Bacharach's melodies are deceptively simple. Despite what the ear thinks it's hearing, they rarely change key; what often accounts for their oddity is Bacharach's refusal to modulate into an easier key where another songwriter might, in order to give the singer a break. Meter does change constantly in Bacharach's



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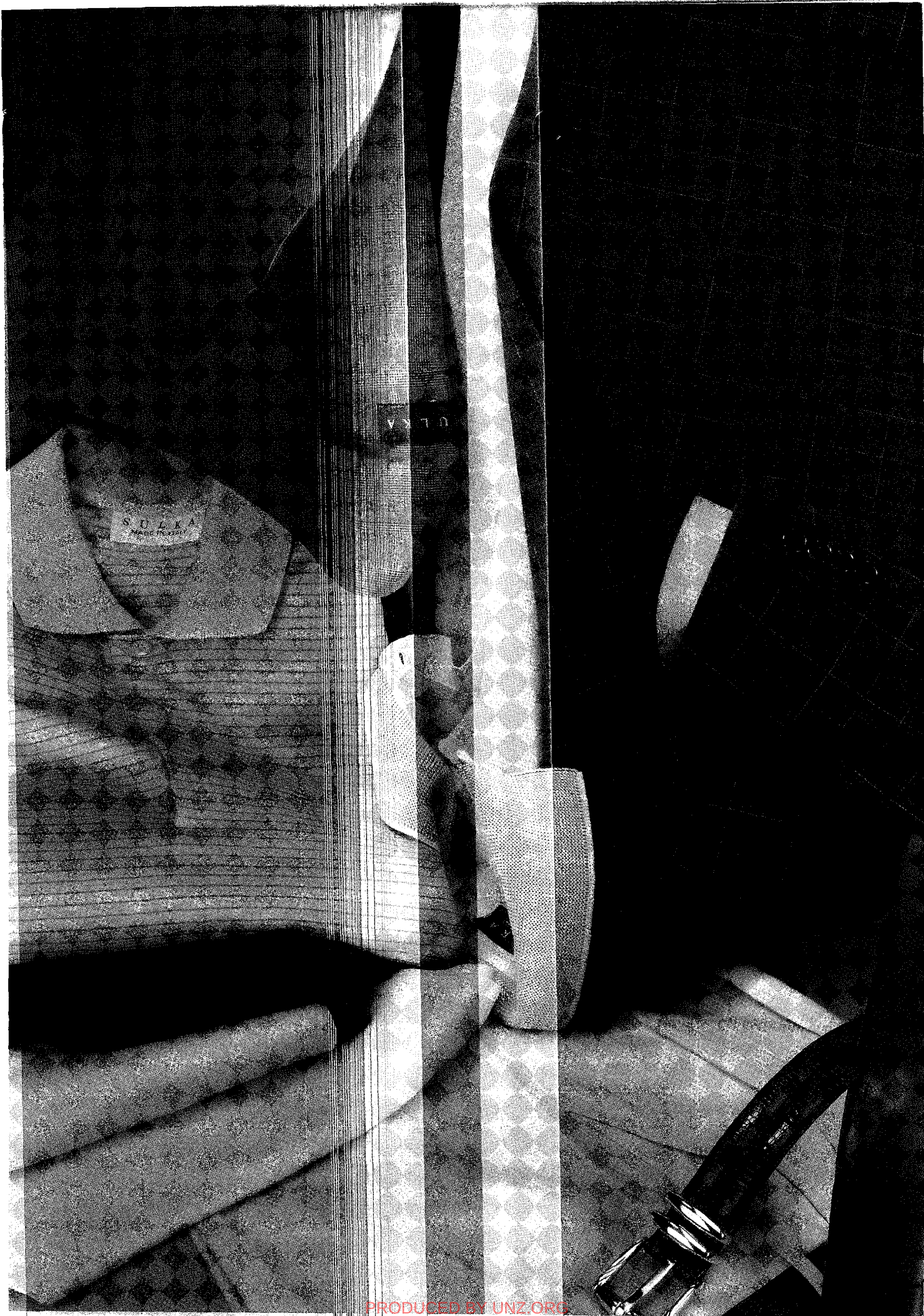
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songs, and they gain even greater rhythmic complexity as a result of his fetish for a kind of syncopation more common in Stravinsky than in jazz and for eccentric note groupings like the sixteenth-note triplets that begin "Anyone Who Had a Heart." Writers of early feature stories on Bacharach marveled that his songs had achieved great popularity despite offering nothing that the man on the street could easily whistle. (This is the same poor fellow who is said to have problems with Stephen Sondheim.) A more justifiable complaint would have been about Bacharach's failure to give dancers much of a toehold: that teenagers of the early 1960s found a way to push each other across the floor to "Anyone Who Had a Heart" is a tribute to their youthful insouciance.

Many of the flourishes that one might think characterize Bacharach as a songwriter turn out on closer inspection to be evidence of his skills as an orchestrator. Bacharach himself might not see the point of such a distinction; he explained in a recent interview that writing a melody and determining which combinations of instruments go where is often virtually a one-step process for him. This may also explain why he has never seemed very interested in orchestrating other composers' songs. Early in his career Bacharach had a reputation for showing up in the studio when one of his songs was to be recorded and gradually taking over every detail of the production. When he and David began producing Warwick's albums, he sometimes entrusted to others the task of orchestrating and conducting those songs he hadn't written.

Tone color and voicing are as important to Bacharach as they were to Debussy and Ellington. He hears bells: triangle and chimes on "You'll Never Get to Heaven," vibes on "Alfie" and "Make It Easy on Yourself," glockenspiel on "A House Is Not a Home." We hear a poky trumpet or flügelhorn in many of his songs where in others of the era we would hear a honking tenor saxophone. Even when a tenor saxophone is featured, as on Dusty Springfield's hit recording of "The Look of Love," from 1967, it is light and airy—consciously evocative of Stan Getz rather than of King Curtis, and set atop rhythms borrowed from Brazilian samba and bossa nova.

The best evidence of Bacharach's genius as an orchestrator might come from comparing Jonathan Tunick's orchestrations for *Promises, Promises* with Bacharach's orchestrations for Warwick of three songs from the show: "Knowing When to Leave," "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," and the title song. Tunick's orchestrations of Stephen Sondheim's scores have been of such high quality that often it's difficult to tell where one man's contribution ends and the other's begins. But Tunick's orchestrations for *Promises, Promises* on the long-out-of-print original-cast album are drab and colorless compared with Bacharach's for Warwick.

As a young man Bacharach studied with Darius Milhaud—a fact duly noted in most early articles about him, as if to suggest that his greater technical sophistication gave him the edge over other pop songwriters of the early 1960s. I find it of greater relevance that before establishing a clear identity as a songwriter Bacharach served as music director for a number of singers and big-time entertainers, including Marlene Dietrich. "He's my accompanist, he's my arranger, and I wish I could say he's my composer, but that isn't true," Dietrich said about Bacharach, introducing him to her live audience on the album *Dietrich in Rio*. "He's everybody's composer." In addition to his formal training, Bacharach's wealth of practical experience set him apart from most of the other pop songwriters of the early 1960s. Like them, he was writing songs calculated to appeal to teenagers, which were usually recorded by singers not much older; unlike them, however, he also knew what it took to put a song across to adult nightclub audiences. Once given the opportunity to produce his own songs, he made dramatic use of this knowledge in the recording studio.

Phil Spector, the first pop record producer to be written about as an artist in his own right, was also the first to recognize the operatic scale of adolescent emotions, on such early-sixties records as the Ronettes' "Be My Baby" and the Righteous Brothers' "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," which featured Wagnerian orchestrations by Jack Nitzsche and Gene Page, respectively. Bacharach's writing for strings was more sophisticated than either Nitzsche's or Page's, and he took Spector's big sound and slowed it to

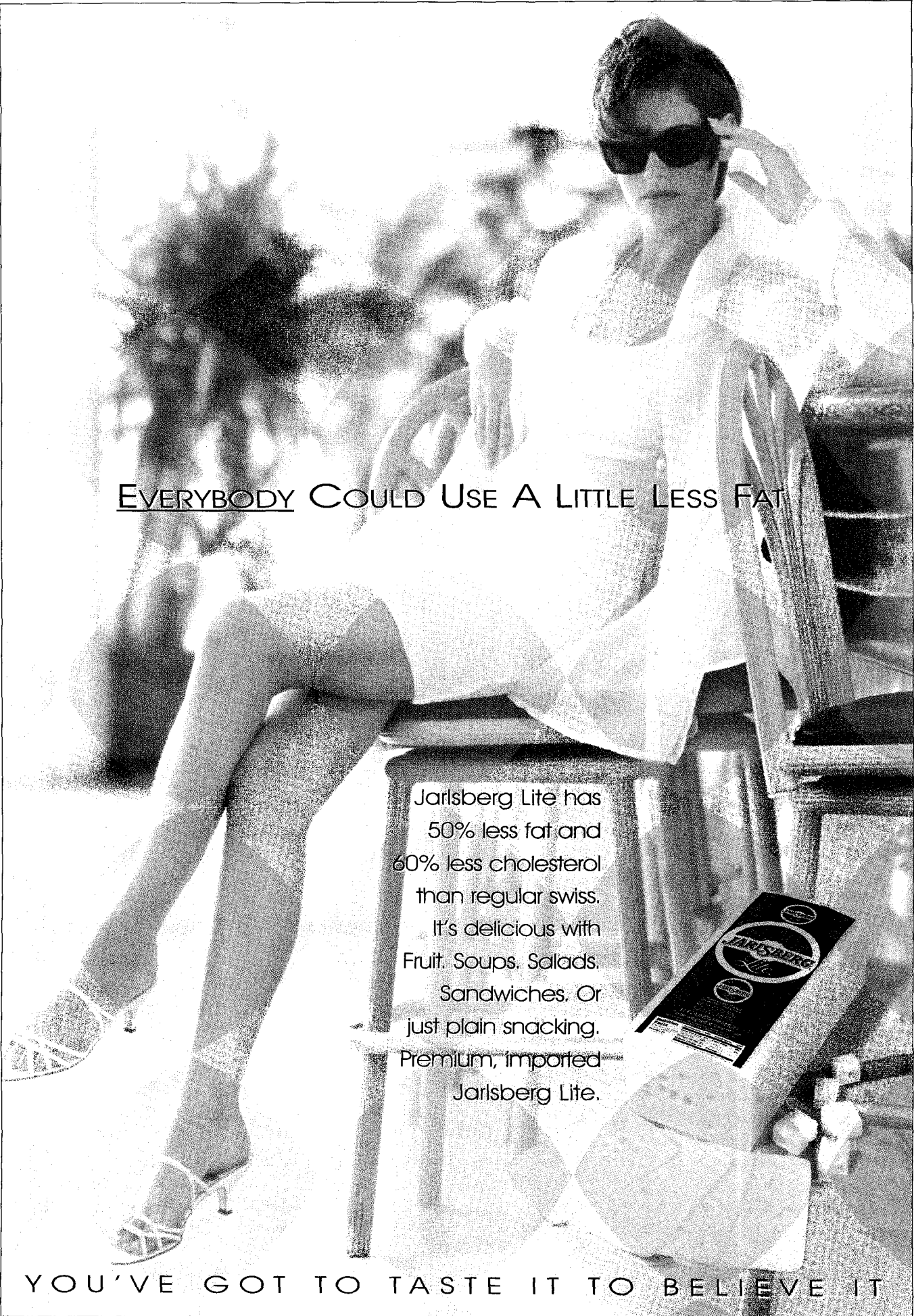
an adult pace. The first Bacharach song to *sound* vaguely like a Bacharach song was "Make It Easy on Yourself," a 1962 hit for Jerry Butler, a Billy Eckstine-like baritone. All these years later what's remarkable about the song is how grown-up it sounds—as much a reflection of Bacharach's elegant melodic line as of the stoicism conveyed by Butler's vocal and David's lyrics.

The unassuming David played a role even greater than Warwick's in Bacharach's success. Bacharach and David complemented each other: Bacharach's melodic phrases often extended across several bar lines, and David often wrote uncommonly long, complex sentences. The team's movie title songs provide the best evidence of David's resourcefulness. It's no easy trick to craft an affecting lyric about love and separation around a song called "A House Is Not a Home," the title song from a movie about an aging madam and her stable. In 1966, the year *Time* devoted a cover to the New Theology and the question of whether God was dead, David put secular humanism on the hit parade.

As sure as I believe there's a heaven
above, Alfie,
I know there's something much more,
Something even non-believers can
believe in . . .

David's lyrics were forever gazing heavenward; on "You'll Never Get to Heaven (If You Break My Heart)," Bacharach's beatific arpeggios created the impression that the number was written by a man who called heaven home.

Not surprisingly, Bacharach's fellow professionals were the first to recognize his genius. Early "cover" versions of his songs—for example, Sandie Shaw's 1964 remake of "(There's) Always Something There to Remind Me," a song written and produced by Bacharach for Lou Johnson earlier the same year—tended to copy his arrangements practically note for note, amounting to a sort of tribute. And when a performer took great liberties with a Bacharach song, as Aretha Franklin did in bringing gospel fervor to her 1968 interpretation of "I Say a Little Prayer" (produced by Jerry Wexler), it usually had the effect of drawing attention to a detail Bacharach had written into the song but chosen not to emphasize.



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BACHARACH soon went from being a behind-the-scenes favorite to being a star—an astonishing transformation at precisely the moment when assembly-line songwriters were being told that their services were no longer required. For a time Bacharach was as famous as any of the singers who put his songs on the charts. When *Promises, Promises* opened on Broadway, he eclipsed not only his nearly invisible lyricist but also the show's producer, David Merrick, and the author of its book, Neil Simon, neither of whom was ever accused of being a shrinking violet. People who would have been unable to say for sure who wrote "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" or "What the World Needs Now Is Love" knew Burt Bacharach by name, just as they might have known the name of Irving Berlin without being able to identify him as the composer of "White Christmas" and "Easter Parade." After a television commercial for a brand of vermouth in which Bacharach and Dickinson (best remembered as Sergeant Pepper Anderson in the TV series *Police Woman*) appeared together as themselves, people knew what Bacharach looked like—more than could be said of Berlin even at the height of his fame. Bacharach was handsome in a tousle-haired, sleepy-eyed, long-jawed, blissed-out-genius sort of way. In the vermouth commercial Dickinson gazed at him as though ready to serenade him with the lines from "(They Long to Be) Close to You" about angels getting together to create a dream come true.

Why Bacharach's moment ended so abruptly is difficult to explain, beyond observing that mass taste is unpredictable. Of possible significance is that he and David acrimoniously terminated their partnership after writing the songs for *Lost Horizon*, a lavish and unrelievedly sappy 1973 movie musical that brought them nothing but embarrassment. Much as Richard Rodgers's music changed for the worse when, after the death of the clever Larry Hart, he began writing with the sanctimonious Oscar Hammerstein, Bacharach's suffered when he began working with his third wife, the singer and lyricist Carole Bayer Sager. Three of their collaborations reached No. 1 during the 1980s, but of these only the poignant "That's What

Friends Are For," recorded by Dionne and Friends in 1985, was instantly recognizable as Bacharach's. Originally sung by Rod Stewart in the 1982 movie *Night Shift* as just a song about friendship, the song has since become a fundraising tool in the fight against AIDS, with the proceeds from Warwick's recording going to the American Foundation for AIDS Research. This stirring anthem cemented Bacharach's reputation as our day's Irving Berlin.

More typical of the songs Bacharach wrote with Sager before they parted were "Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)," from 1981 (written with Peter Allen and Christopher Cross and performed by Cross), and "On My Own," from 1986—plush, gold-card soul. Better Bacharach should have married Hal David, who never again reached the heights he scaled with Bacharach; one of his hits of the 1980s was the maudlin "To All the Girls I've Loved Before," recorded by Willie Nelson and Julio Iglesias. And many of Bacharach's later songs would have sounded livelier if the composer had been allowed to produce them.

BACHARACH'S resurgence has been as unexpected as his disappearance from the charts. Despite his not having written a new Top 40 song in more than a decade, his name and his music are suddenly everywhere. Earlier this spring *Promises, Promises* was performed in concert five times as part of the Encores! series at City Center in New York. The series is the same one that was responsible for the full-scale Broadway revival of *Chicago*, and there has been speculation that similar plans are in store for Bacharach's musical, especially given that the cast for the modest concert presentation included a name actor in Martin Short. (A breakthrough show in its own time, for merging traditional Broadway song forms with contemporary pop rhythms, *Promises, Promises* has always seemed to me to have been the secret inspiration for Sondheim's *Company*.) One of last year's offerings Off Broadway was Tim Pinckney's *Message to Michael*, a show about New York's gay dating scene that, although "laced with references to Barbra Streisand and [Stephen Sondheim]," according to *The New York Times*, took its title from a Bacharach and David hit for Dionne

Warwick. Also last year Warwick's recording of Bacharach and David's "Wives and Lovers" was featured in the hit movie *The First Wives Club*, and Harry Connick Jr. sang "This Guy's in Love With You" on the soundtrack of *One Fine Day*, a romantic comedy starring Michelle Pfeiffer and George Clooney. *Grace of My Heart*, a movie set largely in the pop-music world of the early 1960s, featured as its take-home song—the number heard over the closing credits and leading off the soundtrack album—a gorgeous new song called "God Give Me Strength," written by Bacharach with the singer Elvis Costello.

The pianist McCoy Tyner and the arranger John Clayton turned nine of Bacharach's classic songs into gauzy mood music on Tyner's recent *The Music of Burt Bacharach* (Impulse!); this disc is significant only for being, to the best of my knowledge, the first album of jazz interpretations of Bacharach songs since Stan Getz's *What the World Needs Now*, in 1967. *The Look of Love*, a British compilation of hit versions of Bacharach songs, last year entered the UK charts at No. 6, selling 60,000 copies within two months of its release. (I'm told that Bacharach's soundtrack for the 1967 movie *Casino Royale* is one of the out-of-print LPs most sought after by audiophiles, even though it has been reissued on CD; vinyl is said to capture better the sensuality of Dusty Springfield's rendition of "The Look of Love.") Early next year Rhino Records plans to release a far more ambitious three-disc Bacharach retrospective, featuring obscurities as well as classics. And just last month, as part of its Great Performances series, PBS broadcast a British-produced documentary called *Burt Bacharach: This Is Now*.

Even Bacharach's pompous long-form instrumental versions of his songs have found their champions, not just among the musicians who participated on Zorn's tribute album but also among fans of what is variously called "cocktail," "bachelor pad," and "E-Z listening"—those strange young record collectors with an overdeveloped (or underdeveloped?) sense of kitsch, wardrobes of Rat Pack leisurewear like Kramer's on *Seinfeld*, no girlfriends, and too many good albums in their collections already.

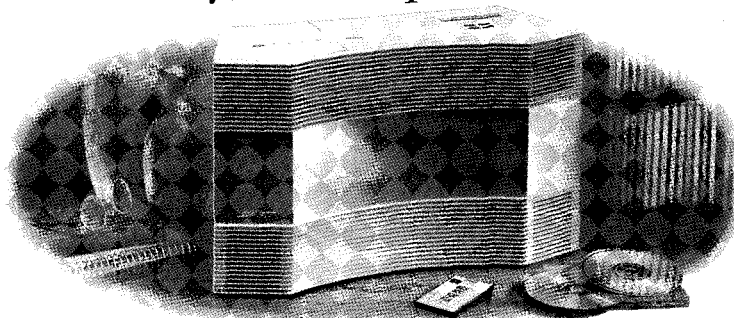
Bacharach now enjoys a hip cachet he

never enjoyed when a new song of his was practically guaranteed a spot on the Top 10. In its own day a song like “(They Long to Be) Close to You”—best remembered as a No. 1 hit by the Carpenters in 1970 (though it was first recorded by Richard Chamberlain, TV’s Dr. Kildare, seven years earlier)—could be dismissed as a sticky favorite of slightly out-of-it young people who grew their hair long but continued to have it styled. Bacharach’s songs gave off a scent of Cashmere Bouquet at a time when most songs on the radio, including those sung as well as written by Carole King, smelled of patchouli. Amid the political protest and guitar sputter of that day’s music, craftsmanship of the sort Bacharach epitomized was taken as a sign of inauthenticity.

POP songs that endure for decades often do so by discarding their original meanings, or by acquiring new ones. Karen Carpenter’s voice means something very different to us now from what it did in 1970, in light of her death from anorexia. We can now appreciate her for what she was—a pretty young woman who had a poor self-image and a better sense of rhythm than the white female singers of her day who foolishly thought that growling lyrics and pushing hard on the beat would make them sound black.

Bacharach’s songs now mean something different too, as a result of belonging to the past without seeming to belong to a specific era. People in their twenties or early thirties, to whom Gershwin and Porter must seem as ancient and remote as the Greek gods, might not be old enough to have heard “The Look of Love” and “This Guy’s in Love With You” on radio the first time around, but it means something to them that these are songs in the classic manner that were written in their own lifetime, or close enough. (A friend of mine who just turned thirty says that one of her earliest memories is of her divorced mother singing her and her brother to sleep at night with “I’ll Never Fall in Love Again.”) Unlike the hits of Motown and the Beatles, which will forever conjure up images of the sixties, Bacharach’s hit songs of twenty-five or thirty years ago strike younger people as having always been there. ☼

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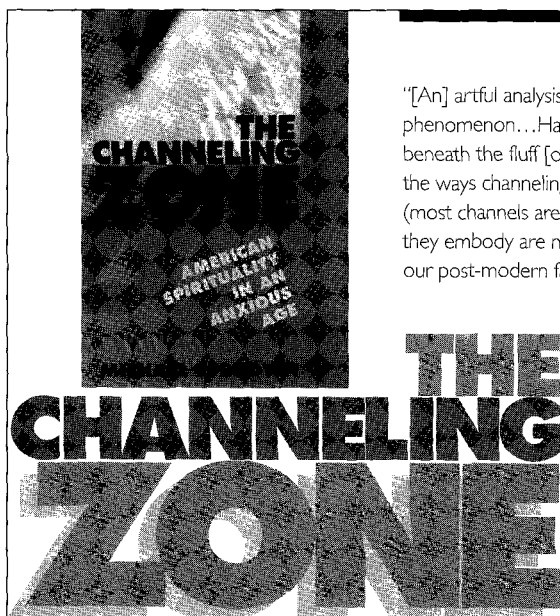
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The Life of Job in Exurbia

Philip Roth looks back in dismay at the 1960s

by Ralph Lombreglia

AMERICAN PASTORAL

by Philip Roth.

Houghton Mifflin, 423 pages,
\$26.00.

PHILIP Roth begins his 1988 memoir *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* by describing the source of his literary imagination.

Dear Zuckerman,

In the past, as you know, the facts have always been notebook jottings, my way of springing into fiction. For me, as for most novelists, every gen-

uine imaginative event begins down there, with the facts, with the specific, and not with the philosophical, the ideological, or the abstract.

This is commonplace wisdom among fiction writers, as the author says in the passage. Yet Roth largely ignores it in his new novel, *American Pastoral*, an allegory seemingly conceived in an abstracted realm of big notions and fixed ideas. *American Pastoral* is a relentlessly mental book, full of inconclusive rumination on material often left strangely undramatized. And that, along with the book's mystifyingly haphazard structure, prevents it from becoming a "genuine imaginative event."

The novel concerns a Jew who does not look or behave like a Jew, a man who comes to be known as "the Swede" in his Newark, New Jersey, high school in the 1940s because of his magically "anomalous face": "Of the few fair-complexioned Jewish students in our preponderantly Jewish public high school, none possessed anything remotely like the steep-jawed, insentient Viking mask of this blue-eyed blond born into our tribe as Seymour Irving Levov." And the magic goes beyond mere looks: the Swede is gifted with an extraordinary athlete's body and talent. His achievements on the playing field seem to be the sole element of legend and self-transcend-



dence in the insular world around him.

Through the Swede, the neighborhood entered into a fantasy about itself and about the world, the fantasy of sports fans everywhere: almost like Gentiles (as they imagined Gentiles), our families could forget the way things actually work and make an athletic performance the repository of all their hopes.

The book is narrated by the well-known Nathan Zuckerman, but Zuckerman in the present day—now alone, separated from the “aristocrat” with whom he’d been living overseas, impotent and incontinent (though presumably cancer-free) from prostate surgery. In the 1940s Zuckerman was a classmate of the Swede’s younger brother and an idolizer of the Swede, that great Other among the Newark Jews: “He’d invoked in me, when I was a boy—as he did in hundreds of other boys—the strongest fantasy I had of being someone else.” This very fiction is the long-delayed fulfillment of that fantasy, because Zuckerman, as he freely admits, concocts most of it, merging with the beautiful, un-Jewish, unknowable Swede by inventing the story of his life. The novel’s most memorable episode occurs early, and is also one of the most directly dramatized: Zuckerman’s forty-fifth high school reunion, where he meets his old friend Jerry Levov, the Swede’s younger brother. Jerry has just attended the Swede’s funeral; the Swede died of the same disease that Zuckerman has lately survived. Jerry reveals a traumatic, decades-old event in the Swede’s personal life, but not much else: “Anything more I wanted to know, I’d have to make up,” Zuckerman says, announcing his intention to “dream” the Swede’s surprisingly unhappy life. He allows his first-person voice to be replaced by the story he’s inventing, and that moment has something of the fictive magic of Nabokov, or of the Eastern European writers whom Roth admires and whom he has published in his *Writers From the Other Europe* series of books for Penguin.

Zuckerman was provoked to make a story by learning of a specific historical event, but his dream of the Swede’s life sweeps us into a novel of ideas. From here on what “happens” is largely *said* to happen, the events of the plot now seen through a veil of issues and themes. At any rate, what happens is that the Swede,

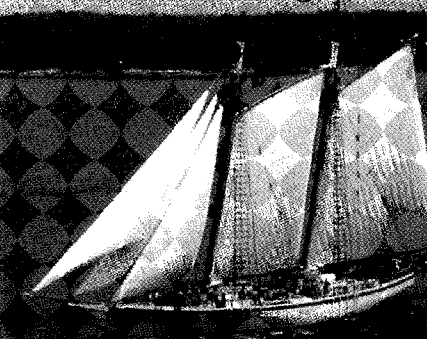
a charismatic, kind-hearted, nearly selfless Jew who could be taken for Anglo-Saxon, rejects a career in sports to go into his father’s leather-glove business. He then defies his father by marrying a shiksa (an Irish Catholic and a former Miss New Jersey), and further breaks with his origins by leaving his ancestral immigrant metropolis for an old fieldstone house in rural New Jersey—site of Revolutionary War encampments, a place of pristine American history. He and his wife have a daughter, Meredith, known as “Merry,” who seems not to have inherited the great beauty of either parent, though Merry’s face is left oddly unportrayed among other palpable faces in the book. Her flaw, however, is not unportrayed: she suffers from a severe stutter. And though her childhood is otherwise idyllic, around the age of fifteen she is suddenly transformed—“almost overnight” becoming fat, slovenly, contemptuous of her family, and committed to extreme leftist politics. By sixteen, in 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War, she has become so radicalized as to bomb the general store in her rural village of Old Rimrock (killing a local physician), and goes into hiding, vanishing from her parents’ lives.

That brings us almost a third of the way through the novel. The Swede’s psychological anguish is described at length, but he takes almost no action, except to meet several times with an emissary of Merry’s. The next five years pass in summary, and the remainder of the present-day action—occupying, along with much flashback, more than half the book’s bulk—takes place in a single afternoon and evening. During this day the Swede’s almost-repaired life is brought down with one sweep of the author’s hand: he finds Merry, who is now a member of the ascetic Indian sect known as the Jains; learns that it was Merry’s Morristown speech therapist who concealed her for the first few days after the bombing; and discovers that his wife is having an affair with her prototypical WASP architect. We, in turn, learn something that has been concealed from us until now: five years before, just after the speech therapist defied federal law by harboring Merry in her home, the Swede himself had an affair with her—an event for which there is no basis in the Swede’s character as we’ve seen it portrayed.

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Thus, on the very day that he meets (and is again spurned by) his fugitive daughter, the Swede also learns that the only two women in his adult life have both wickedly betrayed him. Except for Merry (whom the Swede has left in her Newark hovel, because he can't bring himself to use force on another person), all these people are at the Swede's house for dinner this evening, along with the Swede's mother and father, among others. And then the novel simply ends, without playing out or tying up the various dangling strands.

I HAD expected to enjoy *American Pastoral*, partly because it's by Philip Roth, partly for personal reasons. Its settings happen to be those of my own life. I, too, was born in Newark, New Jersey. My parents met because their families lived in Weequahic (pronounced, by my family anyway, "Week-wake"), the very section of the city where the fictional Swede Levov (and Roth himself) grew up. My mother attended Weequahic High, though seven years earlier than Roth did. And when my family left Newark, in the white flight from the city during the 1950s, they went to the same countryside of north-central New Jersey, outside Morristown, where the Swede buys his old stone house and sets up as a young country squire. I'm exactly the age of the fictional Merry Levov, so when she hung out on the Morristown green in 1968, I was one of the other sixteen-year-old would-be hippies lying on the grass (though in a more tangible stratum of reality).

But in *American Pastoral* the idea that a stringy-haired, sputtering sixteen-year-old destroys her father's life with a terrorist bomb reads like a piece of apparatus wheeled in from another novel altogether—even from another world. It never ceases to feel arbitrary, trumped up, forced upon the poor Swede. This is mostly because the notion seems to have little reality for the author, leaving him to summarize and philosophize rather than dramatize the concrete.

The novel tries to focus intently on the Swede's experience of all this, on his inner life, but the Swede doesn't *have* much of an inner life. As Zuckerman says, the Swede is a character of great "opacity"—a simple, stoic, undemonstrative guy, hard to fathom. Beyond his beauty, kindness, and rhapsodic love of America,

family, and the glove business, there's not much to tell, yet we're reading a novel whose literary gestalt is not dramatic but analytical and expository. The result is a book that cycles redundantly over well-researched but superfluous history, entertains almost any theory or abstract explanation that comes along in the train of Roth's associations, and attempts to depict the mental anguish of the unreflective Swede Levov with rhetorical questions.

For [Merry], being an American was loathing America, but loving America was something he could not let go of any more than he could have let go of loving his father and his mother, any more than he could have let go of his decency. How could she "hate" this country when she had no *conception* of this country? How could a child of his be so blind as to revile the "rotten system" that had given her own family every opportunity to succeed? To revile her "capitalist" parents as though their wealth were the product of anything other than the unstinting industry of three generations.

Roth is a masterly prose stylist, of course, and there are many passages of fine language in *American Pastoral*—luxuriously detailed descriptions of the author's beloved, doomed Newark, the leather-glove business, the New Jersey countryside, the Miss America pageant, the raising of cattle. And the themes themselves are characteristic of Roth: the trials of ethnic identity, the fate of Old World values transposed to the New World, the wrenching political confusion of recent American history. But these strengths are indulged in a way that becomes the book's weakness. The abstracted treatment of ideas, the weighty, morally serious exposition, result in a novel that holds its material at arm's length from the reader.

A story has to work as a story before it can work as an allegory. If one accepts the novel's dramatic premise and then makes a list of seemingly essential scenes, one finds that very few of them are directly portrayed in the book. Roth is perfectly capable of saying "Lights! Camera! Action!" and on the infrequent occasions when he does, the reader sits up straight, savors the sensation of being in a specific place at a specific moment, and hungrily awaits the drama. And yet many times when a real scene is put on stage for us to

witness, it is interrupted by a long, intensely detailed digression. Eventually a miasma of unreality comes to pervade the book. When, five allegedly torturous years after Merry's disappearance, the Swede suddenly learns her whereabouts (she is right in Newark, working in an animal hospital), he drives there (after much deliberation) to wait for her to come out. And as we sit with him in the novel's most momentous moment, waiting for the book's second living legend to walk through a door, Roth launches into a long, dense digression on the history of Newark and the leather-glove industry—a freight of exposition that, for one thing, we've had several times already, and that, occurring at this instant, leaves us dumbstruck.

Such techniques make much of *American Pastoral* feel like notes toward a novel rather than a novel itself. Whether one reads the Swede and Merry as people or as stand-ins for an America brought low by self-righteous narcissism, one struggles to locate the novel's final "attitude" toward them. Is Swede Levov a good, innocent man who has the bad luck to become "history's plaything"? Or is there something significantly wrong with the Swede, and thus some ironic distance between his blithely conformist character and the narrator? For that matter, is there ironic distance between Zuckerman the narrator and the author Philip Roth? *American Pastoral* contains evidence for and against all these possibilities.

One clue may be the alacrity with which Zuckerman rises to his task, his eagerness "to embrace your hero in his destruction." If one steps back to see the book whole, apart from its tangled mechanisms, it seems that one should indeed regard the Swede as a very good man—a very good man who perhaps must be destroyed because he is not a very good Jew. "By virtue of his isomorphism to the Wasp world," Seymour "Swede" Levov escapes the pain and self-consciousness of being a Jew in America; he passes for WASP, and he apparently cannot be allowed to get away with that. In the end, the Swede's charmed escape from Jewishness—his simple possession of his own DNA—seems to be *American Pastoral's* essential subject and the explanation for the terrible punishment that Philip Roth, god of this chaotic fictive world, inflicts upon his latter-day Job. ☛

How Powerful Is Advertising?

by Randall Rothenberg

BREAKING UP AMERICA: Advertisers and the New Media World

by Joseph Turow.
University of Chicago Press,
242 pages, \$22.50.

IN 1957 a former *Collier's* magazine writer named Vance Packard published an investigative report about the American advertising industry's efforts to maneuver consumers into buying goods they neither needed nor wanted. These machinations did not rely on slick imagery, exaggerated claims, or outright deception—tools whose use had subjected marketers and their minions on Madison Avenue to ridicule or censure since the days of P. T. Barnum. Packard's charge was more specific and startling. Advertisers, he claimed, were using hidden symbols to goad the unconscious mind and the body under its control into the act of acquisition.

"Large-scale efforts," he wrote, are being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes. . . . The result is that many of us are being influenced and manipulated, far more than we realize, in the patterns of our everyday lives.

These "hidden persuaders," as Packard called them in the title of his book, took several forms. Some advertising agencies were hiring trained "motivational researchers" to probe deep in the psychological recesses of the mind, and then constructing ad campaigns that exploited the ore found in those canyons of consumerism. Thus did General Foods decide in the 1950s that its photographs of multi-hued, architectural Jell-O desserts were generating inferiority complexes among women, and switch back to de-

pictions of simple, single-layered gelatins. Other marketers were bypassing Jungian archetypes and beaming direct commands into the subconscious mind. Packard reported on an experiment that had allegedly taken place in a New Jersey movie theater in which the order to buy food, flashed at a speed faster than the eye could perceive, had provoked a "clear and otherwise unaccountable boost" in concession-stand sales.

Packard's major source was Ernest Dichter, the director of an organization called the Institute for Motivational Research. A less-well-known but equally important source was a New York marketing consultant named James Vicary, who had claimed credit for that New Jersey movie-theater experiment.

Packard hoped that his exposure of such techniques—which he believed were "antihumanistic" and represented "regress rather than progress for man in his long struggle to become a rational and self-guiding being"—would contribute to burgeoning "public scrutiny and concern." He got his wish. *The Hidden Persuaders* spent six weeks as the No. 1 best-selling nonfiction book in the United States. Its title entered the vernacular. (Thirty-two years after its publication Ernest Dichter gleefully reported that he'd been retained by a company in his native Austria to do consumer studies in the newly opened Eastern bloc. "I'm going to the Soviet Union to look for hidden persuaders!" he told me, laughing.) Its concerns meshed perfectly with its era, a time when fear of subversion was a constant motif in American life, evident in everything from Joseph McCarthy's Senate hearings on Communist infiltration of the State Department to Don Siegel's movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

There was just one problem with *The Hidden Persuaders*: it was wrong. Oh, marketers were conducting studies, and even changing advertising campaigns on the basis of their findings. But there was—and still is—little proof that these efforts to engineer action through manipulation of the unconscious led to any behavioral changes favorable to specific marketers. As for James Vicary's experiment in subliminal advertising—it was a hoax: Vicary later admitted that he hadn't done what he'd claimed. Several subsequent studies of the effectiveness of embedded messages have shown it to

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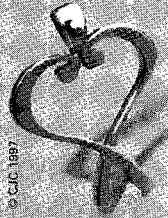
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be virtually impossible to use them to produce specific, predictable responses. Still, faith in the power of the media to induce millions of people to act contrary to their better judgment or conscious desires remains profound. More than three quarters of the U.S. population currently believes that marketers use subliminal messages to sell products or services, according to the *Journal of Advertising Research*; consumers themselves spend some \$50 million annually on subliminal self-help products, such as audiotapes that are supposed to teach one a foreign language in one's sleep.

Today, though, with the Cold War and communism for the most part behind us, our anxieties are evolving. We no longer fear a single enemy bent on our psychopolitical subjugation. Approaching the millennium, we are struggling, nationally and internationally, with liberation movements, interest groups, and advocates of countless alternative belief systems—anti-porn feminists and pro-lifers, ufologists and Afrocentrists, anti-Zionist Hasidim and pro-euthansians. As some of our fractious hordes grow violent (bombing abortion clinics and federal courthouses, dumping a dead animal on *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour's plate), we dread nothing more than, as the title of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s recent best seller put it, "the disuniting of America." It stands to reason that someone would find the cause of our current ills residing within the realm of image-making and advertising.

Joseph Turow has discovered a "revolutionary shift" in the strategies and tactics of marketing-communications companies, which, he says, "has been driven by, and has been driving, a profound sense of division in American society." Like Packard, whose social concerns, language, and insistence he mimics, Turow, a professor at the Annenberg School for Communication of the University of Pennsylvania, believes that advertisers, working in concert with conglomerating media companies, are forcing "a breakdown in social cohesion" in the United States, whose end will be nothing less than the death of the American idea. Inciting "anger and alienation," he writes in *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*, "advertisers . . . will act to ensure that in the new media world the 'Us' will lose out to the 'Me.'"

Turow's report, however, although provocative, sweeping, and well made, is less interesting for what it reveals about the changing contours of advertising than for what it says about the preoccupations of an intellectual elite. Like Vance Packard—like Bob Dole and William Bennett, for that matter, or Catharine McKinnon and Noam Chomsky—he persists in attributing to a chaotic and variegated media system immediate and specific social and cultural consequences, without any of the ambiguity that contrasting empirical evidence would suggest. More than that, though, Turow represents a shift in the perspective from which elites are regarding issues of individualism and conformity in American culture. Indeed, *Breaking Up America* is a lovely example of a literary form we might term "masscult nostalgia."

TUROW'S argument is a simple one. In the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, he says, marketers, advertisers, and media companies developed a view of American society that was not only strikingly different from the grand theory that had preceded it but also opposed to the national interest.

Instead of a single mass market that assembled, routinely and predictably, around a discrete set of information and entertainment sources, they now saw a society increasingly fragmented along lines of race, class, and sex. Their pecuniary interests in a consumer economy, combined with new research and media-distribution technologies, thus compelled marketers to abjure appeals to the masses in favor of ones that "encourag[ed] people to separate themselves into more and more specialized groups" and develop "habits that stressed differences between their groups and others." These contributed, in turn, to a further, finer fracturing of society. The result: "social division."

"The strategies discouraged the creation of central media-meeting places where all sorts of people could congregate to sample each others' views, news, and entertainment," Turow writes, using a historical past tense that lends a tone of ominous certitude to his book. The elimination of such commons "thereby lessen[ed] an opportunity for them to get a feel for social diversity and ask how they and others fitted together in the larger society."

Turow draws an efficient portrait of a

marketing complex determined to replace the "society-making media" that had dominated for most of this century with "segment-making media" that could zero in on the demographic and psychodemographic corners of our 260-million-person consumer marketplace—the nooks that have been illuminated by such research systems as the Yankelovich Monitor and the Values and Lifestyles (VALS) Program. Three national television networks and a short list of mass magazines were overwhelmed by myriad print and electronic vehicles, from *Rolling Stone* to Black Entertainment Television, whose editorial content—following Madison Avenue's obsession with niches—stressed the contrasts between their own audiences and those of other media.

At first this occurred primarily through "signaling"—beckoning to specific audiences with graphic symbols, content, and formatting. Thus the quick-cut visual styling of MTV signaled to a young audience able to assimilate its cacophony of images more than to an older audience accustomed to the linear narrative flow of, for example, *Murder, She Wrote*.

Newer technologies are moving advertisers and media beyond signaling to "tailoring"—the creation and distribution of content for and to specific individuals or groups. Examples include relationship marketing, such as frequent-flyer clubs that tie a traveler to an airline; selective binding, which allows publishers to customize a magazine's advertising and editorial content for specific groups of subscribers; and "push" software, which draws from the vast resources of the Internet matters of pre-identified interest to a user and throws only those materials up on his computer screen.

Central to both signaling and tailoring is the desire not only to lure desired audience segments but also to exclude those who do not fit the profile. In theory such audience concentration renders advertising appeals more effective and efficient than a system that treats consumers as a bulk commodity, and enables media companies to charge their advertisers more for each eyeball, offsetting the penalty a smaller audience would otherwise exact. It is these exclusionary schemes that worry Turow. "The signaling of distinctiveness," he writes, "acted out images of an America that

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What are the facts?

Israel's Commitment to Peace. Israel committed to grant wide-ranging independence to the Palestinians. Israel has meticulously adhered to its commitments under the Agreement. It has, unfortunately, opened vistas and expectations among the Palestinians that will never be fulfilled. Those are primarily that an independent Palestinian state would be allowed to come into existence, that Jerusalem would be divided, that the eastern part of the city would become the capital of such a state, and that the "refugees"—people who left Israel almost fifty years ago—should be allowed to return.

Thus, while Israel has meticulously kept its commitments under the Agreement, the Palestinians have lost no opportunity to foment unrest and bloody demonstrations in response to imaginary "violations" on the part of Israel. The first and most notorious was the rioting in response to Israel's opening an entrance to an archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem. Another pretext for violence was the construction of housing within the city limits of Jerusalem. **Total Disregard by the Palestinians.** How have the Palestinians performed under the Agreement? The answer is: very poorly. Their disregard for virtually all of its provisions has been so egregious that it amounts to a mockery. Despite repeated assurances that they would amend their infamous Charter, which unequivocally calls for the destruction of Israel, this has still not been done. They have taken insufficient measures to combat terrorist activity—in fact the Palestinian Authority

(P.A.) continues to release well known members of terrorist groups. Even though the Agreement demands an end of incitement to violence, Yasser Arafat and his lieutenants consistently whip up their followers to "jihad" (holy war). As the bloody riots in connection with the tunnel opening and with the construction of housing units have shown, such incitements always fall on receptive ears. It was also agreed that the P.A. should have no authority in Jerusalem. Even so, the Palestinians maintain (and the

Israelis have so far suffered them to maintain) official presence in Jerusalem, especially the notorious Orient House, to which foreign visitors and diplomats

No peace can possibly come about until . . . the Palestinians . . . comply fully with the Agreement and . . . realize that violence cannot take the place of negotiation.

like to make pilgrimages. One of the most egregious violations of the Agreement is the size of the Palestinian "police" force, which is now estimated at over 50,000 (virtually all of them former PLO terrorists). Incomprehensibly, Israel (always accommodating) has provided this "police" with an arsenal of attack weapons, which at the first trumped-up occasion (the opening of that tunnel entrance) were turned and used with deadly effect against Israeli civilians and military.

The list of violations of the Agreement goes on and on. There is the failure to confiscate illegal arms; the arrest and interrogation of Israelis by the Palestinian police; the abuse of VIP privileges; the movements of Palestinian "police" outside the so-called "Area A" without prior permission; the unauthorized construction of Dahaniye Airport; the unauthorized construction of Gaza Port; the failure to enforce visitors' permit requirements; and much more.

The Palestinians and the rest of the Arabs threaten at every hitch in the "peace process" to break it off or to resort to bloody violence. Regrettably, the United Nations, which takes scant interest in the mayhem, mass murder, and genocide that goes on all over the world, takes a totally disproportionate and one-sided (consistently pro-Arab) interest in this "peace process" and in the alleged "violations" of it by Israel, without considering the almost total disregard of virtually all of its provisions by the Palestinians. No peace can possibly come about until the world forces the Palestinians to comply fully with the Agreement and until they realize that violence cannot take the place of negotiation.

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was becoming more and more fragmented in its attitudes toward the desirable tone, pace, and topics of daily life."

UNQUESTIONABLY, advertising and the media that carry it can affect, have affected, and will continue to affect the progress of life in this nation and around the world.

In a marvelous chapter in his seminal work *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (1988) the Columbia University media historian James W. Carey described how the telegraph, within a matter of decades, transformed the shape and content of finance, social interaction, even literature. By accelerating information transfer from the gait of a horse to the speed of light, it supplanted crass arbitrage in commodities markets with futures speculation. It enabled the creation of time zones. It popularized a lean "telegraphic" prose style that eventually drove from the journalistic and literary marketplace the florid writing common through the mid nineteenth century.

The development of brand advertising, coinciding roughly with the introduction of the telegraph, the rise of the department store, and urbanization, hastened the nationalization of the United States. By helping to create aggregate demand, advertising quickened the shift to mass production. The branding of mass-produced goods helped to usurp the primacy of local markets. National advertisements for these products, running among the stories in new national magazines, impelled the nation to coalesce around shared customs, creating what the historian Roland Marchand has termed "a 'community of discourse,' an integrative common language shared by an otherwise diverse audience."

Certainly this common language helped to promote certain products and product categories. James D. Norris, in *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865-1920* (1990), pointed out that the use of soap became a prerequisite for acceptance into polite society in no small part because of advertisements like one in 1884 that featured the famed preacher Henry Ward Beecher extolling the godly virtues of Pears' soap. More recently, as Marchand has noted, sanitary napkins became *de rigueur* among sophisticated

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women owing partly to Kotex's advertising during the 1920s in *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

But these campaigns were part of a much larger and more diverse enterprise, one identified in the subtitle to Marchand's book *Advertising the American Dream* (1985): "Making Way for Modernity." Branding, advertising, department stores, and public transportation turned consumption into a public event, thereby introducing into a young democracy something unknown to our European forebears—a competition for status that supported unending cycles of consumption. This process wasn't always pretty or benign: Stuart Ewen, in *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (1976), complained that the quest to create "national homogeneity" focused people's dissatisfactions inward and made the mass-production system the solution to them, contributing to a stifling political and cultural uniformity as this century evolved. But it did sustain the capitalist economic structure.

These consequences were, however, cumulative, powerful only after the passage of time, and—Ewen's somewhat conspiracy-minded outlook notwithstanding—consistent with the root desires of a population eager for a life of middle-class leisure unthinkable on the farm. Time and again researchers have found it difficult to correlate the content of advertising campaigns with long-term economic effects. Some advertising content, notably price and product information, undeniably moves consumers, but only temporarily and in limited numbers. The ability of advertising to persuade large masses of people to change their attitudes and induce action that permanently alters a company's fortunes—no one really knows how that works. In the conclusion to his 1942 study *The Economic Effects of Advertising* the Harvard professor Neil Borden reached a series of judgments that must have unsettled his industry sponsors. "Does advertising increase demand for individual concerns?" he asked. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Does it affect production or distribution costs? "Indeterminate." Does it lead to a concentration of supply and anti-competitive pricing? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Its social and cultural significance is just as ambiguous. Consumers are quite

aware that advertising is propaganda, and compensate for that fact when assimilating its messages—just as they compensate for the perceived biases of the media to which they attend. The great socioeconomic transformations of recent years—the acceptance of Japanese cars, the advent of the personal computer, the rise of VCRs—were accomplished with little advertising support. "Time and time again," James Norris wrote, nearly half a century after Borden, "advertising has proven powerless to instigate, to sustain or to reverse trends in public opinion or fashions of consumption."

Wherein, then, lies the fabled "power" of advertising? In its ability to inure Americans to a political and economic system structured around democratic capitalism. Advertising, in the sociologist Michael Schudson's famous formulation, is "capitalist realist art." It celebrates and promotes "life and lives worth emulating," according to the definitions laid out by the culture itself. Its effect is cumulative, and (consonant with the finding of the opinion-research pioneers Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld that "personal influence" was at least as important as and probably more important than mass-media influence) it works by spurring and meshing with conversations that identify for all participants a communal understanding of the good life. "Speech," as the political theorist Hannah Arendt wrote, "is what makes man a political being."

JOSEPH Turow has chosen to ignore most of this evidence from history and sociology. To him, advertising is broadly powerful. "The industry exceeds the church and the school in its ability to promote images about our place in society," he writes. The new segment-making advertising is especially potent. Turow accordingly quotes the futurist John Naisbitt: "Direct marketers are at the forefront of where everybody is going to be."

It may well be true that America is fragmenting, fracturing, disuniting. But if this is the case, it's not necessarily helping the marketers who are "driving" the trend. In fact, it may be destroying them. The consultant William M. Weilbacher analyzed the tendency toward niche marketing in his book *Brand Marketing* (1993).

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Profitability, Weilbacher found, was declining for many niche marketers. The reason was obvious: the increased number of market niches, instead of attracting consumers by their differences, merely strengthened people's perception that most products were alike. "Marketers have too long emphasized the search for new segments," Weilbacher wrote. "Consumers have long been mostly indifferent to this search. They perceive products within categories—whatever grammar of segmentation the marketers have imposed upon the product category—as being mostly interchangeable."

Marketers were simply doing what the increasing speed of global technology transfer was allowing them to do, which was to match their competitors innovation for innovation, in ever shorter periods of time. As a result, perceptions of product parity (a 1988 study by the advertising agency Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn found that two thirds of Americans believed that a majority of brands in most categories were exactly alike) forced marketers into a series of price wars that cut chunks out of their net profits. Philip Morris sliced the price of Marlboro cigarettes to improve their competitive strength against low-priced brands. Other marketers, Procter & Gamble among them, moved to a system of "everyday low prices" that they hoped would lift them up from the debilitating cycle of discount after discount. Some began combing their inventories for brands they could discontinue. But the segmentation-induced spiral of commodification (it's currently embroiling the cereal industry) still erodes marketers' margins.

Segmenting the packaged-goods market may seem to be of pale significance next to the segmenting of media content by race, age, or sex. But efforts toward the latter derive from the former, and are equivalently vague, if not in intent, then in content. That a dentifrice-maker targets hip young men with one toothpaste and older women with another is immaterial: the people who buy each do so for the same reason—to clean their teeth. Likewise, the Fox network's *Living Single* may be aimed at, and draw, a younger audience than *Golden Girls* reruns, but both shows—virtually all sitcoms, in fact—hew to a standard set of moral and comic conventions, and their fans con-

sume them to fill equivalent needs for mindless entertainment. "Success in the marketplace," says Andrew Ehrenberg, a British brand-marketing expert and a co-author of *Television and Its Audience* (1988), "derives not from being different from your competition, but from being the same." If you can tell that there's no difference between New Blue Bleachless Odorless Nookles with the picture of Aretha Franklin on the front of the super-concentrated box and New Blue Bleachless Odorless Frankles with Pat Boone's photo on the container—well, wouldn't you choose the cheaper brand? It's the American way.

THE methodology that Turow employs in *Breaking Up America*, though, leaves little room for consumer activity. His approach in reporting this book was to concentrate on what advertising and media people say to each other. He read every article in *Advertising Age* from 1977 through mid-1995. He also read, less thoroughly, at least six other trade journals, and attended seven industry conferences. He conducted eighty-six interviews, largely with people who had a professional interest in the subject. His book in no small part reflects an industry talking to itself.

Turow accepts what these people say without question. His naiveté is troubling. He quotes an Ogilvy & Mather executive as saying, in underlining the shift from mass to niche, "Thirty years ago we knew what men wanted because they all wanted the same things—a Chevy, apple pie, and to send their kids to college. But the changes in society have fragmented that." Wrong. Madison Avenue clearly did not know what men—or women—wanted. Which was why Detroit and its agencies were caught so flatfooted by Volkswagen (whose sales shot from fewer than 2,000 to 150,000 vehicles a year from 1953 to 1959, without the backing of a major national ad campaign) and later by Toyota, Nissan, and Honda.

One must regard statements like that of the Ogilvy executive—and a great many of the stories that the marketing complex tells itself—as elaborate, if occasionally deeply felt, fictions. *Breaking Up America* is a guide to a newish set of these fictions, and they are in their own way as interesting and revelatory as the

fictions promulgated during the advertising industry's great heyday, the tumultuous postwar economic boom that created the modern media edifice.

During this period, which lasted roughly until the Nixon-era recession, advertising came to represent, to itself and to the civilian population, a nation's ambiguous relationship to plenitude. Frederic Wakeman's novel *The Hucksters* (1946) damned the industry as a representation of the soullessness that was replacing the idealism of the New Deal and the Second World War. David Ogilvy's *Confessions of an Advertising Man* (1963) was, with its strict rules for copywriting and page layouts, as much a paean to hubristic social engineering as anything that would emerge from Robert McNamara's Pentagon or Sargent Shriver's Peace Corps. Jerry Della Femina's memoir *From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor* (1970) was a celebration of youthful libertinism as wild and woolly as the Broadway musical *Hair*.

Whether novel or chronicle, however, these books were still social fictions, in which advertising must always pretend to be with it, whatever "it" happened to be at the time. Since the effect of advertising content on sales or market share must, in many cases, remain all but unknowable, these fictions are the only way to persuade clients that the adman (or, increasingly, the adwoman) has the touch.

Advertising, in short, is a screwball comedy, of the kind that Preston Sturges used to make. It's by turns optimistic and cynical, guileless and greedy. It thrives on talk, and it blithely waltzes through contradictions.

Turow nods in this direction. He mentions that the desire of market-research firms to identify new segments is less a quest to discover truths lurking in the culture than "a reflection of the warp-drive competition among researchers to find ever more profitable ways of slicing up society." He also says that black ad agencies' insistence that only they know how to move African-American consumers might stem from their fear of losing business to the Madison Avenue giants.

But for the most part Turow believes what he is told. So when he discovers a 1980s *Time* magazine advertising promotion that proclaims, "More than ever, real

consumers are concentrated at the top," he sees it as a divisive message aimed at cleaving the haves from the have-nots, because he's been told that division is the order of the day. This allows him to condemn "a cacophonous and often amoral competition over ways to slice up U.S. society," to denounce advertisers' "pitting one group against another for monetary gain," and to divine that "privileging people based on lifestyles could spark social antagonisms"—without ever offering a single piece of social-science research that I could find, or even persuasive anecdotal evidence to support his Malthusian thesis.

Nor does it occur to him that *Time's* promotional message might, in fact, be unifying. At a discounted, Publishers Clearing House price of fifty cents a week, owning a copy of *Time* is a pretty cheap way for just about anyone in the country to feel "concentrated at the top."

JOSEPH Turow is hardly alone in finding an America fragmenting under the weight of new communications technologies. Last year I had coffee with John Perry Barlow, a former Grateful Dead lyricist and a doyen of cyberspace, near the small, untidy Greenwich Village apartment where he lives when he is not on the road or at his home in Wyoming. "We have," Barlow told me, "in the West in particular, a culture of monotheism that goes back to Abraham, which assumes that the world is shaped by imposed control." With the rise of the Internet he was looking forward to "a general deinstitutionalization, humans creating institutions of the moment, for the purpose to be served. I'm saying that we're moving to a condition where well-applied citizen action *becomes* government itself."

Barlow's libertarian musings are well regarded on the political right. The Progress & Freedom Foundation, a Washington policy organization associated with Newt Gingrich, seems delighted by the divisive force of new tailored communications vehicles. The easy availability of information over the Internet, the foundation said in its *Magna Carta for the Knowledge Age*, to which Barlow contributed, "spells the death of the central institutional paradigm of modern life, the bureaucratic organization," notably government. Cities, too, could be left to



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wither, because "advanced computing power" will "allow people to live further away from crowded or dangerous urban areas."

Arrayed against this vision of technological utopianism are various dystopians, most of them identified with the left or center-left, some of whom willingly accept the moniker "neo-Luddite." Kirkpatrick Sale, Clifford Stoll, and Sven Birkerts are part of this growing group, who see fragmentation as inevitable but malignant.

According to one of their number, the cultural critic Mark Slouka, of the University of California at San Diego, in his recent book *War of the Worlds*, cyberspace represents "the grand finale to one of the great human migrations of all time: the twentieth century movement into our own 'surround.'" Like Joseph Turow, Slouka believes that technology will force us to become "increasingly isolated from ever-greater portions of the outside world."

Underlying this broadly accepted view, of course, is the curious assumption that at some point in the past "central media-meeting places" made us aware of a unified outside world. Turow actually pulls out the hoary Second World War-era "mutual cooperation and togetherness" and laments that "mass marketing and a three-network universe were perfectly appropriate for reaching this kind of society."

Yet this notion of a vast national agora seems quaint on its face, considering that three-network television is less than fifty years old, less than a quarter the age of the Republic. And to posit—as Turow does, at least by implication—that a common cultural conversation emerged because two thirds of the television audience once watched *The Beverly Hillbillies*, whereas today a mere fifth watch *Seinfeld*, seems to stretch the idea of social cohesiveness thin. As to segmented markets, I'm not sure the fact that I—who in childhood loved Velveeta on white with French's mustard—can now buy Gouda, pita, and Dijon at my local Shop Rite represents any diminution of the national promise.

There's a more intriguing question hanging over all this breast-beating: Why has mass culture become an object of intellectual veneration? Time was when the left, spurred on by the Frank-

furt School, accused masscult and the technologies that created it of destroying man's ability to reason, preparing the way for fascism. "The 'mechanics of conformity,'" Herbert Marcuse wrote in his 1941 essay "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," "spread from the technological to the social order." The Frankfurt School's celebration of individualism—"the consummation of a fully developed society," according to the social critic Max Horkheimer—would seem anathema to the new dystopians (if curiously acceptable to the new right).

To be fair, Turow and the other dystopians would probably argue that niche-mediated individualism is just as false as the mediated mass mind—worse, because atomization and chaos destroy society, whereas ennui merely deadens it. But their masscult nostalgia still seems to represent a dark view of human nature that is actually quite aristocratic and conservative. "Given the chance to separate themselves electronically from types of people they believe are threatening their well-being," Turow

writes, "media users are likely to do so."

I have my doubts. I'm no utopian, but my more-than-casual exposure to cyberspace has shown me that E-mail, computer bulletin boards, and newsgroups actually bind family, friends, and strangers together over long distances. They facilitate, rather than replace, face-to-face meetings. Are white supremacists thus rallied? Yes, but they did just fine when all they had was such conventional media as John Birch Society newsletters and *The Spotlight*.

Meanwhile, on the Internet, I've been to a New York writers' cocktail party, an East Coast lounge-music fans' assemblage, and a rural Virginia senior citizens' group meeting, each of which brought together people who wouldn't have known one another were it not for the divisive new technologies. Their interests were narrow at first, to be sure. But people do have a tendency to explore many things after that first blind date. Out of those conversations grow real, strong, and diverse communities. And, *pace* Professor Turow, breaking up is hard to do. ☼

BRIEF REVIEWS



From Nineveh to New York

by John Malcolm Russell.
Yale/Metropolitan Museum of Art,
232 pages, \$40.00.

Austen Henry Layard, a young Englishman with more pedigree than money, was poking about the Middle East when, in 1845, he discovered the remains of Nineveh and organized its excavation. Assyrian art was an astounding and disconcerting revelation to midcentury Britain. Layard was a relative of Lady Charlotte Guest, the daughter of an earl and the wife of Sir John Guest, a magnate in the iron business. Lady Charlotte took to Assyrian art at once and with enthusi-

asm. By means that today would be considered highly improper (and that did raise a few Victorian eyebrows), she procured enough Assyrian sculpture and artifacts to add a "Nineveh Porch" to the Guest estate of Canford Manor. The porch was a wild mixture of Victorian Gothic taste and modified Assyrian motifs. The antiquities were real—a most extraordinary collection to have been in private hands. The pieces were eventually dispersed, hawked about by an art dealer, and flirted with by several museums; they wound up in the Metropolitan as a gift from John D. Rockefeller Jr. Display space was always a problem. At one point it seemed that "these marbles, which began their Western career in the

Canford stable, might spend the remainder of their days in the Metropolitan's garage." (Under plastic, because the roof leaked.) Mr. Russell writes with unpretentious efficiency, seldom revealing his own opinion of the events he reports, which involve aesthetic theory, social wire-pulling, religious misinterpretation, and a number of interesting people—beginning with Lady Charlotte, who had a weakness for young men on the make. It is a truly remarkable story.

The Gospel According to the Son

by Norman Mailer.
Random House, 242 pages,
\$22.00.

Mr. Mailer told one of his publisher's editors, "Novelists are supposed to look into the eye of the tiger," and certainly a life of Jesus related by Jesus himself is a daring enterprise. The result, however, is not particularly surprising. Mr. Mailer presents a good man, who does indeed hear divine instructions and advice, whose miracles are genuine (and also exhausting), and who loses his temper, contradicts himself, worries about the source of his power, and fears for the future of his people and the movement he has started. What is missing in this reasonable character is any hint of the magnetically persuasive preacher that Jesus must have been. Satan and Judas have considerably more energy, probably because Mr. Mailer had less Scripture and therefore more freedom in imagining them. One can hardly hold this against the author: Milton had similar trouble. Satan is a great scene stealer.

Lawyerland

by Lawrence Joseph.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux,
240 pages, \$22.00.

Mr. Joseph, once a lawyer himself, persuaded attorneys and one judge to talk about the profession. It may be the interview format, which records words but not timing or tone of voice, that makes these people seem pointlessly belligerent, fond of spiteful gossip, and very protective of their tails. They create a general atmosphere of discontent, but one does not learn anything definite about the law in their company.

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Doo-Dah!

Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture

by Ken Emerson.

Simon & Schuster, 400 pages, \$30.00.

As everyone surely knows, Stephen Foster (1826–1864) was a prolific composer of American popular songs that spread around the world. Bayard Taylor (1825–1878) heard “Oh! Susanna” sung in Hindi in Delhi. Foster’s songs were irresistible. Foster himself was a feckless drunk who managed to be paid very poorly for his music at a time when other popular composers prospered. Mr. Emerson covers the rise of American popular culture as well as Foster’s sad career, and does it well. He describes the development of the minstrel show, the interweaving of African and European musical traditions, the erratic effects of racism, the influence of imports like Jenny Lind, and the devious methods of publishers. It is all thoroughly interesting.

From the Outer World

edited by Oscar Handlin and

Lilian Handlin.

Harvard, 491 pages,

\$55.00/\$24.95.

In their thorough and lucid introduction to this collection of travel reports, the Handlins describe perceptions of and attitudes toward the United States in non-European countries. The visitors’ observations that constitute the body of the book vary widely in point of origin and point of view. A few are by well-known authors—Rabindranath Tagore, Octavio Paz. Most are by journalists or students or diplomats. These travelers observed racism, economic disparity, poor school systems, and a number of other regrettable but familiar deficiencies. They occasionally found something to admire. What holds a reader’s attention, providing occasional surprises and even amusement, is the way a particular writer views his material and the relationship of that view to his personal background. Travelers, whether they want to or not, carry their own countries with them, and some of the countries one encounters in this collection are decidedly engaging.

Mexican Hat

by Michael McGarrity.

Norton, 316 pages, \$22.95.

Mr. McGarrity is a skillful writer who weaves an intricate plot about misdoings in the Gila Wilderness of New Mexico. The mystery starts with a crime as old as poaching and ends with one as contemporary as today’s headlines.

Dawn of Art:

The Chauvet Cave

by Jean-Marie Chauvet, Eliette Brunel

Deschamps, and Christian Hillaire.

Abrams, 135 pages,

\$39.95.

The Chauvet Cave was found in 1994, and has been identified as the oldest painted cave yet found anywhere, with artwork more sophisticated than that of later date, and depictions of animals not seen elsewhere. The three discoverers provide a spirited account of their excitement and delight on opening the amazing cavern. Handsome photographs present a very small sampling of the paintings. This book, published promptly in 1996, is being repromoted because it is unlikely that anything more will emerge from Chauvet for some time to come. The French government has, as usual, assumed possession of the cave to ensure its protection and careful study. The landowners affected by the procedure do not agree on their property lines but do agree that the compensation offered them by the authorities is inadequate. The triangular row is now in the courts. As Jean Clottes, the president of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites, observes in his epilogue to this beautiful and frustrating book, “If it has waited for thirty thousand years, what are a few years more?”

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Recent books by *Atlantic* authors:

Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events That Made Us Who We Are Today by Steven D. Stark. *The Free Press*, 340 pages, \$25.00. Stark is a regular contributor to *The Atlantic*, and portions of this book were originally published in these pages.



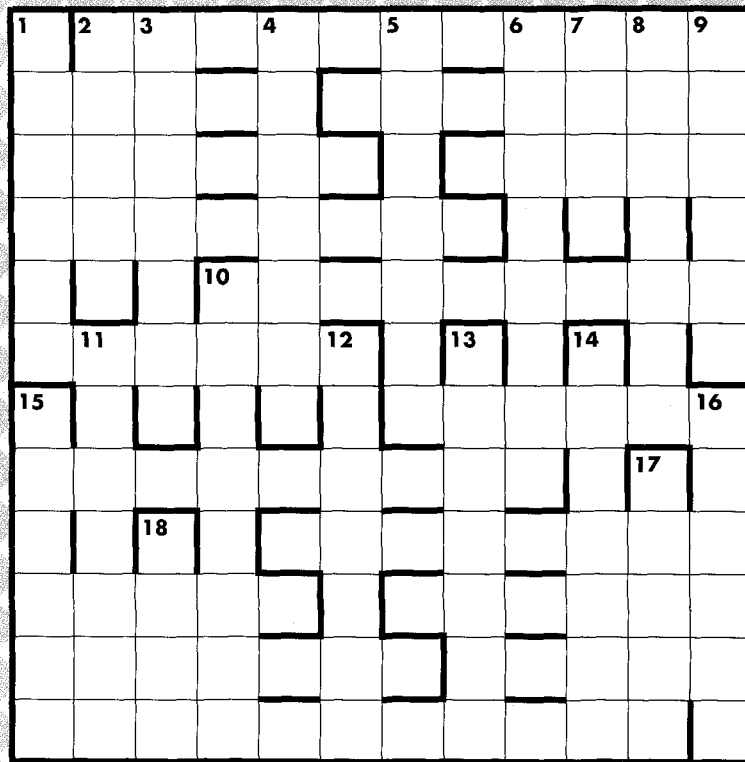
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Fortune Cookies

The best Chinese restaurant in our neighborhood is the Cryptic Wok, where the noodles are spicy and the fortune-cookie messages are suitably puzzling. For your delectation we've reproduced below the curious auguries and maxims we've found in our cookies so far this year. As it happens, these messages make up the 16 Across clues whose answers belong in the accompanying diagram. The clues are in random order and are strung together with no extra words to connect them, and the beginnings and ends of clues do not necessarily coincide with the beginnings and ends of fortune-cookie messages. To place the Across answers in the diagram use the Downs (which are normal) as a guide. Answers include four capitalized words.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 119.



Across

- You will marry without having a bit of dough
- Many are transformed by your simple and natural charisma
- One rotten apple takes a long time to change
- Peace and love will fill spirits in this place
- Stay heartless—it will make you dissent that way
- Eating right, you will possess the character of Superman
- Superficiality runs in celebrity
- Body weight goes up and down, but you must shed the outside pounds
- Going into openings distresses a worm in a cuckoo
- She who takes to the skies audibly drops from the skies

- Power and influence appear misleadingly large
- Wear the work of a tailor and start on the outside
- Longing arrives when you look back in admission
- The deeds of a wandering knight decline
- Splitting peace of mind will bring you good fortune

Down

- 1. English clan chief has gas (6)
- 2. Leader of an Arab family, for those listening in (5)
- 3. German gent vocalized pause coming before a Spanish painter (7)
- 4. Terrible sot hops around a country (7)
- 5. Drugged, almost hold post office up (7)
- 6. Warn off young Henry IV's sea creatures (8)
- 7. Times are turning crass, ultimately (4)
- 8. Cook quickly holds mass in class (7)
- 9. Hammer left covered by water plant (6)
- 10. Female gymnast coming down on bad leg shows fight (8)
- 11. Reach the Windy City during a night before a holiday (7)
- 12. Longed for salary finally gained (7)
- 13. The old man fusses about soft drink (4,3)
- 14. Augur's back in powerful omen (7)
- 15. Supplies valuable rock in streets (6)
- 16. Farm animals' home was first fashioned (6)
- 17. Private eye initially turned a bit blue (5)
- 18. Fashion designer is one in stick-up? (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORLD IMPROVISATION

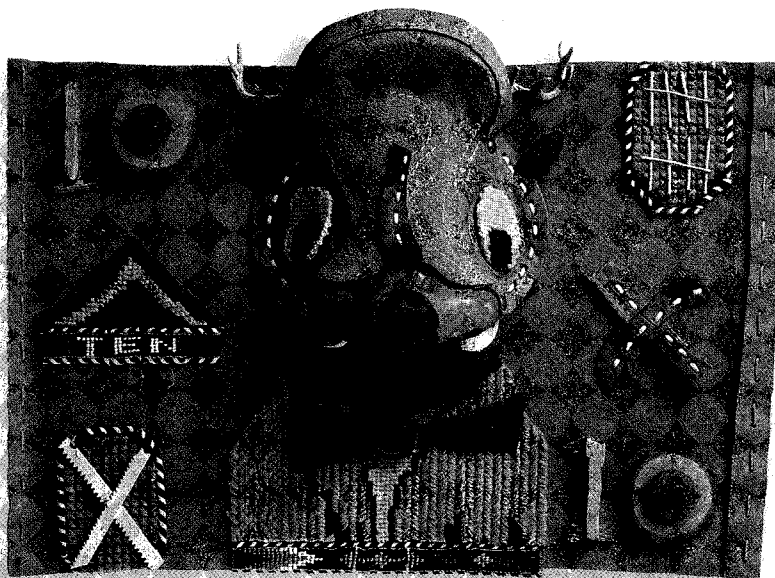
by J. E. Lighter

Money Talks

As noted in these pages and elsewhere, a debate is under way in Washington over the Consumer Price Index and whether it has been accurately gauging the rise in the U.S. cost of living or has been overestimating the pace of that rise. It is a highly charged debate—billions of dollars in government checks to ordinary Americans ride on the outcome—and politicians are understandably torn between wanting to *pass the buck* and trying to get enough *bang for the buck*.

As the preferred slang term for what Washington Irving called “the almighty dollar,” *buck* in all likelihood sprang from *buck skin* or *buck hide*—a commodity of exchange, and metaphorically a loose measure of value, in Colonial trade with Native Americans. (“He has been robbed of the value of 300 *Bucks*, & you all know by whom”—this 1748 quotation comes from the Ohio River Valley, and is cited in Mitford M. Mathews’s *A Dictionary of Americanisms*.) The earliest undisputed example of *buck* in the precise sense of “dollar” (“mulcted for the sum of twenty *bucks*”) has a Sacramento provenance, and dates back only to Gold Rush times. Although the Forty-niners may well have popularized this new sense, traders at outposts east of the Continental Divide were probably already using it; the scanty written records of vernacular speech of the time preclude certainty. Unlisted in early slang dictionaries, *buck* seems not to have gained national popularity until the 1890s—a good example of the slow dissemination of slang in the days before radio, television, and the Internet.

Also from the mid nineteenth century comes *sawbuck*, a term synonymous with



Investigations of slang
by the editor of the
Random House Historical Dictionary
of American Slang

“sawhorse,” whose connection with the meaning “\$10 bill” was provided by the Roman numeral X that used to appear on \$10 notes. The X apparently called to mind the crossed wooden supports of the sawyer’s sawhorse, on which logs were cut with a bucksaw—no pun intended. These bills were sometimes also called just Xs before the Civil War—when a dollar was a dollar, a *sawbuck* had many times its 1990s purchasing power, and \$10 bills must have been a comparatively impressive sight. More impressive still was the *C-note*, or \$100 bill, C being the Roman numeral for 100. A five-dollar bill was, of course, a V. From the Yiddish *finef* or *finf*, meaning “five,” comes another word for a *five-spot*: the *fin* of poker players and middle-aged cabbies.

Even amateur economists can plausibly account for the lexical lag in coining a slang term for \$1,000. The term *grand*, latterly *G*, didn’t evolve until the present century: before that the sum was too astronomical for routine discussion. *Grand* (short for “a

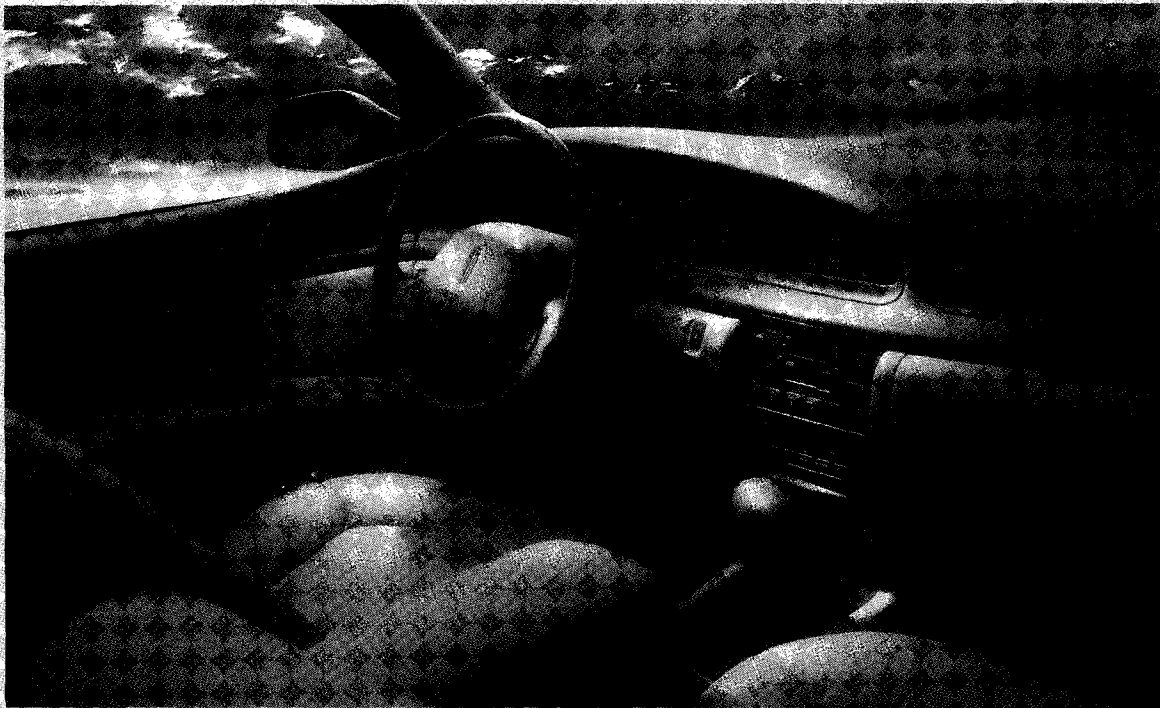
grand amount”?)—no one really knows) didn’t catch on till the boom years following the First World War.

The earliest terms for cash were transplants from Great Britain, chiefly *shiners* (silver or gold coins in general), *pewter* (silver coins, and hence money generically), and the deprecatory *brass*, which appeared in the young Joseph Hall’s satirical *Virgidemiarum* of 1597–1598 and which lasted for three centuries.

The large size and significant heft of old-time silver dollars enriched the national metaphor bank with the term *cartwheel*. (Gold dollars, in contrast, had no such heft; minted from 1849 to 1889, they were smaller than a modern dime.) The slang vocabulary for cash runs into the dozens of terms, among them *berries*, *bones*, *dead presidents*, *dinero*, *frogskins*, *moola*, *simoleons*, *spondulics*, *tin*, and *wampum*. The term *scratch*, which reminds many people of *chicken feed*, a.k.a. *peanuts*, can in fact refer to any sum.

As for the iconically American *dough*, first attested in 1851, the conventional humorous explanation of its origin is that everybody “kneads” it. More likely to be on the money is simply the notion that money, like *dough* (and *bread*), is one of life’s necessities. From *dough* comes the partly homophonic slang term *do-re-mi*.

An old money word enjoying a revival these days is *ducat*, which refers to a European coin associated with Renaissance theater and which entered the American vernacular in the mid nineteenth century. The word crops up frequently nowadays in rap music and makes this cameo appearance in the movie *Clueless* (1995): “He’s single, he’s forty-seven, and he earns minor *ducats* at a thankless job.”



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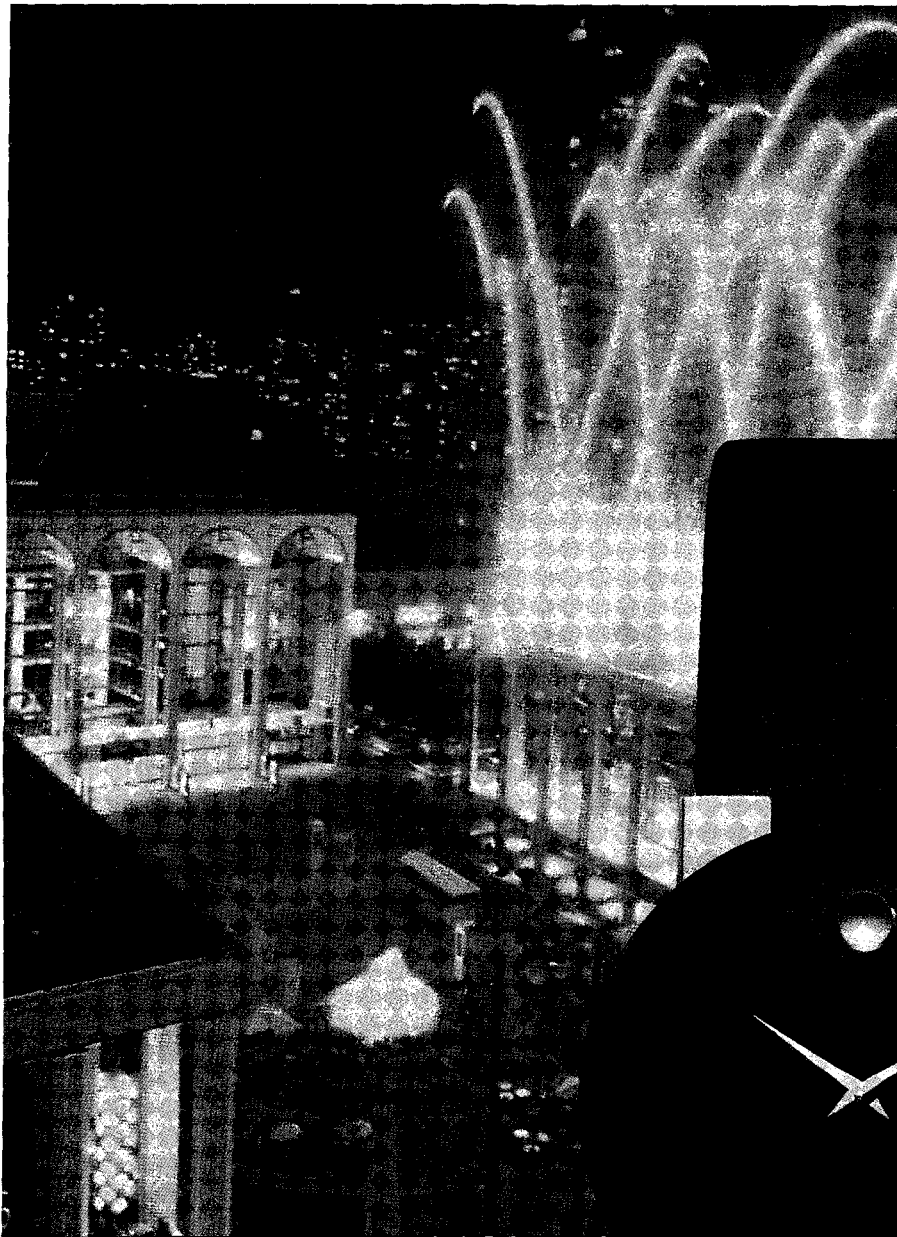


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